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SUBJECTS FOR INQUIRY

MR. CHURCHILL'S broadcast and speeches have made two contradictory impressions. Its sombre tone and its unflinching courage aroused our sympathy towards the man who bears so bravely his crushing load of responsibility. But he is mistaken in supposing that the public anxiety inclines to break the national unity by seeking scapegoats. Inadequate and second-rate as the men on the spot in Malaya may have been, the causes of this disaster go far beyond their time. It began with the encouragement Sir John Simon and the governing caste gave to Japanese expansion from the Manchurian affair onwards. Its roots lay in a class hostility towards the Soviet Union and a similar attitude towards revolutionary China, whose military power was grossly undervalued. We are paying the price in Malaya, Burma and India of our racial arrogance towards Asiatics. From the mass of the native population in Singapore, as in Penang, we could get no help in our hour of need. An empire burdened by this record cannot undo overnight the errors of a whole generation. What we ask of Mr. Churchill is the possible. Save in his attitude towards India, he had no share in shaping these ruinous policies: on the contrary, the basis of our trust in him is that he had opposed them. Let us consider, rather, how far he is meeting our anxieties in matters that may admit of a rapid readjustment.

He has granted an inquiry into the failure of collaboration between the Air Force and the Navy which may explain the escape, unobserved, of the German battleships from Brest. But its terms of reference are severely limited. We certainly wish to know why our aerial reconnaissance broke down, with the result that three hours of daylight were lost before the ships were detected in Dover Straits. But our curiosity goes much farther than this. Is our technique of attack from the air all that it should be if we can hurl 4,000 tons of bombs on two battleships and a cruiser with the result that they are still fit to steam at top speed from Brest to Bremerhafen? Our attack on them from the air in the Straits had to be launched in conditions peculiarly unsuited to precision-bombing. The only chance lay in an attack by torpedo-carrying planes. Of these, against an enemy who had massed 400 planes in the sky, we had only six elderly Swordfish planes of an obsolete type, armed with a torpedo so light that it can cause little damage to a modern battleship. The pilots displayed a suicidal courage, but their deaths only serve to point the questions that the Services are addressing to the War Cabinet and the higher command. We are suffering from a refusal to modify notions of air-power that are completely out of date. They go back to the days when Mr. Baldwin used to tell us that the bomber would always get through, and that the only reply was reprisal-bombing. In that case it was logical to create an independent air force, whose function was conceived to be simply to bomb military objectives of one sort or another. The operational use of aircraft in collaboration with the Army and Fleet was entirely neglected, and little attention was paid to the construction of the types of plane it requires—the dive-bomber and the torpedo-carrier. The faith in bombing persisted long after the development of the defence had rendered precision of aim impossible. Have we even now abandoned the belief that we can destroy German military power by bombing? The inquiry we should call for would rapidly review this whole conception of the use of air-power, the justification for an independent air force, and the policy which governs our choice of the types of plane to be constructed.

As to Singapore, we should confine our questions to the last phase of the siege. Why were reinforcements landed recently when it was obvious that no prolonged defence was possible? We have sacrificed to notions of prestige a force of 55,000 men with their tanks and equipment. Our prestige has not in fact gained by the weak defence of this ill-planned fortress, and we have wasted the men who are sorely needed in Java and above all in Burma. This same romantic bias prevailed also in the decision to defend Hong Kong. Whose was this decision? It bears the impress of Mr. Churchill's impulsive pugnacity. Ruinous from the strategical standpoint, it is all the more painful because we cannot rely on Japanese humanity towards prisoners of war. In Shanghai they are trying to destroy white prestige by using the American Marines they took prisoners as rickshaw coolies. Everything now turns on our ability to hold Rangoon and the Burma road, for it is on China's man-power that we shall have to rely in any future counter-offensive. In the Philippines General MacArthur can make a superb defence, because America had the wisdom to concede their early independence to the Filipinos. Will the Burmese stand by us in the test that is now before us, and have we deserved that they should?

Two major questions dominate the immediate future. We cannot guess whether we have to expect an early attack on India. The folly that neglects even now to enlist India's patriotism for her defence is unpardonable. But the other possibility is that the Japanese will try rather to occupy some of the many islands of the Indian Ocean, to use them as bases from which to cut the Cape route to Suez. Have we as yet any coherent plan of defence in this vast region? How, for example, do we propose to deal with the possibility that Vichy may hand over Madagascar as it handed over Indo-China? Our last question is the gravest of all. Germany is still our chief enemy, and our fate will turn on the ability of the Russians to withstand the offensive they must expect in the Ukraine in May. What are our plans for an effective diversion? Libya, because of the difficulties of transport, is perhaps the worst theatre we could choose for this purpose. If May and June go by without an effective stroke elsewhere, we may find that our unreadiness has postponed Germany's collapse by two years.

Home Front (*by an Industrial Correspondent*)

What does the Government mean to do about the distributive trades? The report of the Board of Trade's committee on the non-food trades gives little guidance; for the committee still puts its trust in voluntary arrangements, to be arrived at largely under the auspices of the various Trade Associations. This will be cold comfort to the owners of the hundreds of thousands of single shops, not owned by any chain or combine, on which the heaviest burdens are now falling. These small shopkeepers are already being squeezed out by thousands, owing to sheer inability to meet their overhead charges out of the restricted margins in limited sales. The big store or chain can close departments or branches, and cut its costs. The small shopkeeper must either swim or sink. As long as he could draw on stocks and find a fairly wide range of unrationed and un-price-controlled goods to deal in, he had some chance. But now, in one trade after another, he is finding these avenues closed. There is, of course, black-market dealing—inevitably, under the circumstances. But shops are closing down at a rapidly increasing rate; and the high average age of the small shopkeepers, which limits their transferability to more essential work, adds to the seriousness of the problem. Obviously, the retail trades have to be contracted; but is a system which gives the advantages to the big concerns likely to mean the best release of labour for war work? Is it not also likely to add unnecessarily to the time spent in shopping by forcing more busy people to shop at a distance, when small, near-by shops are forced to close down? The entire policy of the Board of Trade is suspect of being too much influenced by the Trade Associations, which tend to be dominated by the bigger concerns and, in many cases, rather to welcome the squeezing out of a number of the smaller competitors. Compensation, we are told, is impossible. All the more need for those who hold this view to devise a fair compulsory scheme, instead of leaving it to voluntary action—which commonly means leaving it to the Trade Associations and the law of the jungle.

The changes in soldiers' allowances are no more than tinkering with the problem. The reduction of 3s. in the sum deducted from weekly pay and the 1s. increase in the children's allowance will no doubt be very welcome. But even taken in conjunction with the "nest-egg" which is to be accumulated as a credit for after the war, the new rates leave the position of the serving soldier and his family still grossly worse than those of the majority of workers in the war trades. The £3 minimum to the agricultural workers is bound to have repercussions on feeling in the Army. So will the railwaymen's demand for a £3 minimum, if it is granted by the Arbitration Tribunal which has been considering it this week—and the railwaymen clearly have a strong case for bringing their all-in minimum up to at least £3, even if they do not get the £3 plus special war allowances to which they are laying claim. The £9 a year (£6 for women) which will accumulate under the new scheme as a demobilisation payment barely compares with the sum which an ordinary worker can get credited to him as deferred income tax; and the worker has, whereas the soldier has not, the additional opportunity of making voluntary savings. It can no doubt be argued that anything which improves the economic position of the soldiers' family will tend to make his wife less ready to go into war work. But this is an argument which nobody will dare to advance publicly; and if the soldiers' wives have to be forced into industry, underpayment is the worst possible way of doing it. Surely the time has come for paying the serving soldier or airman on a scale, including what he gets in kind, comparable with wages in civil life.

* * *

A first-class political battle is going on behind the scenes over the question of agricultural prices. The farmers, backed by the Ministry of Agriculture, say they were promised higher prices to cover the cost of the £3 agricultural minimum wage. It is not denied that they were promised higher prices: the question is whether the promise extended to passing on the whole of the additional cost, even if the farmers are making high profits. The Treasury appears to be taking the view that only a part of the cost ought to be met directly out of the Exchequer, and that the farmers can afford to meet a part of it themselves. There have been rumours of Mr. Hudson's resignation, or offer to resign; and there is no doubt that the contest has been hot. The argument for the higher prices is that they are necessary to induce the farmers to give high production, and that there will be disastrous reactions unless the farmers are given all that the N.F.U. has led them to expect. There is, unfortunately, a good deal of force in this argument. Farmers are temperamental folk; and it would be very easy for them to sit back and make sure of a decent income without exerting themselves to get the utmost out of the land. Of course, if the higher prices are given, a good deal will come back in E.P.T. But the Government will also have either to let the cost of living rise or to extend the range as well as the amount of its subsidies designed to keep it down. My guess is that the farmers will get their way, or most of it, because the Government will not dare to risk a fall in agricultural output.

* * *

The establishment of the Ministry of Works and Planning under Lord Reith is a large topic which must be discussed in some detail another week. Here I only want to point out that it makes urgent the publication of the second Uthwatt Report, dealing with questions of compensation, and the passing speedily of an Act implementing the recommendations of both Reports. The transfer of the town and country planning powers of the Ministry of Health to Lord Reith's department means nearly nothing; for the Ministry of Health's powers were slight and negative rather than positive. Local authorities were hopelessly tied down by the impossible financial conditions attaching to local acquisition and to compensation. Another point of importance is that apparently the powers of Lord Reith's Ministry are not to extend at all to Scotland. With every sympathy for the desire of the Scots to plan their own country, it is plain that no sort of planning which is to extend to industry and its location can be effective unless Great Britain is handled as a unit under a single control. This among other things serves to show how far last week's announcement still leaves us from any real decision to establish planning machinery capable of devising or executing anything in the nature of a real post-war economic plan.

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CABINET ORGANISATION

MR. CHURCHILL is bound, we believe, to reconstruct his Cabinet. The indications are that the House of Commons is not prepared indefinitely to leave so much responsibility on the Prime Minister's shoulders. The demand is for a genuine War Cabinet capable of sharing the burden of decision on terms of equality with the Prime Minister. The reasons are sufficiently obvious; they are stated with admirable clarity in two communications that we publish this week from Mr. Tom Wintringham and a Conservative M.P. We all know that the severest period of the war is before us; that it cannot be successfully fought as the defence of an Empire and without the active enthusiasm of the subject peoples who compose it; that even British troops, as the Singapore story reveals, cannot be expected to submit to massacre if they are asked to fight without air support, and that with a far more critical shipping situation the country confronts the necessity of siege economies and the equal sharing of our diminishing luxuries. Mr. Churchill has fought this war on an out-of-date pattern; we must have a Cabinet of able men to do what has now to be done. It is still within Mr. Churchill's power to lead such a Cabinet, if he will.

Sir William Beveridge, in the *Times*, urges that this War Cabinet should consist of Ministers without departmental responsibilities, though not without some degree of specialisation on particular branches of public affairs. This issue has, indeed, been raised again in an acute form by the failure to make the new Ministry of Production into a real Ministry, with the Minister's hands on the key points of economic organisation. Such a Ministry, it is argued, would be impossibly top-heavy, and all that is practicable is a Minister for (the co-ordination of) Production, without any real department of his own, and with the duty rather of settling disputes and allotting priorities between the separate supply departments than of doing anything to organise production under his own direct control. The same argument is used against a real Ministry of Defence—in which case the Prime Minister himself holds an analogous office as a co-ordinating Minister without a Ministry. What has been done in the sphere of production is to initiate the structure already in existence in the case of defence, with the substitution of Lord Beaverbrook for Mr. Churchill as the co-ordinating genius.

Quite apart from the special difficulties attending a co-ordinator of production who has no power to co-ordinate labour this system gets the worst of both worlds. A Minister with a portfolio, but without a department, is in fact an anomaly, and can only hope to do his job effectively if he is fortunate enough to be at the head of a harmonious group of Ministers who are prepared to think rather in terms of the total war effort than of the claims of their separate departments. Such Ministers, moreover, must have their own departments in very good order if they are to be in a position to act in this spirit; and it seems clear that the Minister of Supply at any rate will have his work cut out, unless he is prepared—and permitted—to alter radically the status of the almost independent Controls of which his department is largely made up. It may be granted that, *if* the Ministers grouped together under the co-ordinating authority of the Minister of Production were all prepared to think less of their departments than of the entire economic effort, *if* they had their own departments well and completely under their orders, and *if*, further, the co-ordinating authority of the Minister of Production extended over the whole field, the new form

of organisation might work well. But, apart from what has been said about the first and second *ifs*, the third *if* raises the most unsilenceable doubts. The new Minister of Production will have very little control over the shipyard sections of the Admiralty, and, what is much more important, he will have no control at all over the key factor of labour. Under all these limitations, we entirely fail to see how the new arrangement can possibly be expected to work; and it will work even less than it otherwise would if, as is probable, the new Minister of Production has to spend a good deal of his time flying to and fro across the Atlantic, leaving as his deputy the Minister of Supply, who is not a member of the War Cabinet, whereas the Minister of Labour is.

Everyone knows that this anomalous arrangement, as far as it concerns labour, is a matter of politics, and not of effective war organisation. It is a part of the unwritten political treaty under which we continue to be governed that Capital shall control capital, and Labour labour. Therefore, nobody must interfere with the virtual independence of the Controls, which represent the capitalist authority over capital, and nobody must interfere with Mr. Bevin, who represents the Labour authority over labour. But in truth the control of war industry cannot possibly be split up in this contradictory way, without very serious loss of efficiency. As long as it has to be split up thus, there can be no real Minister of Production—and not even a real Minister for the Co-ordination of Production; for to co-ordinate production without control over the labour factor is sheer impossibility for anyone, whatever his personal qualities may be.

If this extraordinary arrangement has to be accepted for the time being, it adds great point to Sir William Beveridge's contentions. For if, for political reasons, co-ordination cannot be secured under a single Minister, there remains only one phase for securing it—the War Cabinet itself. But a War Cabinet consisting mainly of men burdened with heavy departmental duties cannot possibly carry out this task of co-ordination, which requires not merely a few big decisions of principle, but constant day-to-day adjustments between conflicting claims. The only kind of War Cabinet that can undertake this sort of co-ordinating duty, in addition to its general task of running the war as a whole, is a Cabinet consisting of men without fixed burdens—in effect, a Cabinet of manœuvre, whose members can freely turn their attention from problem to problem, and from department to department, as need arises and as sectional inefficiencies or misfits or mistakes of policy are brought to light.

What we need is not merely a War Cabinet free from departmental duties, but a War Cabinet of men who will refuse to be bound by the terms of any political compact or inter-party truce that stands in the way of winning the war. It is all wrong that Mr. Bevin should double the parts of Labour Minister and member of the War Cabinet in order to ensure that the interests of labour are not prejudiced, and that Lord Beaverbrook should double the parts of Minister of Production and member of the War Cabinet with a parallel mandate in the interests of Capital. Watchdogs for their respective sides they are doubtless, up to a point, bound to be, even under the existing conditions of crisis; but their sectional attitudes are exaggerated both by the dual positions which they hold and by the implied terms of the compact under which they hold them.

We have taken the example of Production. The moral would have been the same if we had examined other phases of the war effort. No mere reshuffle will suffice. The Cabinet must be composed of personalities whom the country can trust; in any case they will have to face a period of terrible adversity. To do so they must be inspired with a new attitude to the war, to the subject peoples, to economic organisation, to political warfare, to strategy and to home morale.

THE POLITICS OF HATE

No great war has ever been waged without hate; and there have always been men in every belligerent nation whose minds have become so steeped in hate that their reason becomes driven by the dreadful logic its poison secretes. They never emerge without gathering about themselves instruments of their grim purpose to whom the principles of civilised living—the only purpose which can justify the making of war—become less important than the fulfilment of hate's end for the sake of hate. And this end, as it assumes an overwhelming authority over them, moves to a reckless disregard for every purpose and every method which safeguard the rationality of mankind.

Ever since Mussolini and Hitler began to plan the conquest of the world for the principle of counter-revolution, the one rock upon which the prospect of a decent future for mankind could be set was the insistence that a distinction could be drawn between those who were their avowed and eager disciples and those who were compelled, in less or greater degree, to the acceptance of their tyrannies. On all past experience we were entitled to the conclusion that there was not a separate species of the human race, *Homo Germanicus or Homo Italicus*, the members of which it was necessary in their millions to destroy. The power of Nazism, the power of Fascism, it was necessary utterly to destroy; and with their destruction it was essential to break up the social pattern of which they were the outcome and to establish unbreakable safeguards against its re-emergence. But it was felt—and rightly felt—that we fought to transform not German nature, but German behaviour, not Italian nature, but Italian behaviour; that the average German and the average Italian were made of the same impulses and instincts as the citizens of other nations. The alternative was the mass-destruction or enslavement of all Germans and all Italians. A world which embraced that alternative would rapidly mould itself in the pattern it sought to destroy.

The politicians of hate reject this distinction; and we are now in the full tide of an organised, if half-subterranean, campaign to impose the results of its rejection upon the Government and people of this country. Those who operate it are of diverse origins and work by different ways; but the cumulative effect of their effort is towards the single purpose of making victory serve the supreme end of hate. They do not, of course, avow this end; all they are concerned, they say, to secure is that mankind shall be saved from a third aggression. But their treatment of those who refuse to accept their assumptions is not less important as the real index to their objective than the pattern they draw of the world they seek to found.

The politicians of hate give their doctrine expression in every shape and form. There is the quasi-learned book or pamphlet; this is the field in which Lord Vansittart and the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* are specialists; they attempt to infect the literate with their own overwhelming emotion. There is the popular newspaper article, which varies from the spread of general invective to the kind of loathsome individual particularisation which seeks to brand with suspicion victims of the tyranny who will not accept their doctrine; and this is done, as in the *Sunday Dispatch* of February 8th, with the knowledge that those whom they denounce can hardly hope to make an impact upon the public such articles seek to infect with their poison. There is the attack, persistent, deliberate, built on the most careful misrepresentation, of those Government officials who will not lend their authority to their campaign; and this is done in a way which seeks not only to secure the dismissal of the officials concerned, but also to warn the Ministers who may protect them of the danger to which their public reputation may be exposed if they become associated with men about whose supposed "pro-Germanism" there are whispers abroad. At a lower level, there is the warning to his fellow-exiles that some figure of importance in the politics of the emigration must be shunned if they wish for peace and security. At the lowest level of all, the boundaries of this effort begin to touch the area in which delation and espionage make their connections with the secret police. The whole climate engendered by this politics of hate breeds inevitably the temper of fear and envy, suspicion and misunderstanding, in which the deliberate infliction of unjustified pain for the sake of nourishing hatred becomes, because hate is itself a moral obligation, a duty not to be shirked. No one who has not seen at first hand the ghastly results of this procedure can even begin to measure the sufferings it causes. Nor can he know the ease with which those virtues, pity, charity, mercy, which give human relations their loveliness, become, for the politicians of hate, the signs of a weakness it is vital to destroy. By an inevitable process, the politicians of hate assume the habits of the tyrants we are fighting. They transform the very victory for which they are concerned into an instrument of their hatred.

How far this emotion can carry an able man can be seen in an article by the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* in its present issue. His fear now is of a German revolution from which may emerge a democratic Germany with which we make an unCarthaginian peace. Not only are those who hope for this revolution a danger to their country. The German exiles who work for that revolution, who seek to forward its coming, are traitors, Quislings, Fifth Columnists; for by seeking the premature overthrow of Hitlerism they work for a strong Germany and thus render vain the whole purpose of victory. We are not fighting, he thinks, for an idea; we are fighting for survival as a nation. Nothing matters but survival; we are not concerned with the ends for which we survive. A good British citizen is, it appears, one who will give up every quality that gives Great Britain its claim to the moral leadership of free men and women if that surrender secure survival. And since the only legitimate gospel is "My country, right or wrong," the Germans who dream of and work for the "other Germany," the Germany in which Hitler is destroyed, in which militarism is rooted out, in which, at long last, freedom and democracy have taken their full place, those Germans are the most dangerous enemies this country confronts. They must be stopped from broadcasting; and they must not be permitted to disturb the emergence of the conviction that "the perpetual disarmament of Germany, the restoration of the Anglo-French alliance, the establishment of a strong Poland and a strong Czecho-Slovakia with favourable strategic frontiers and in permanent alliance with one another, and, above all, an England strong enough on land, on the sea, and in the air, to defend herself

and her empire against any hostile confederacy and to maintain the balance of power—these are the irreducible conditions of a lasting peace in Europe." We are, in a word, to transform Great Britain and its empire into one vast garrison devoted to the maintenance of overwhelming armed might in perpetuity that we may be safeguarded against the dangers of militarism in Europe.

I do not doubt the sincerity of the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, nor, indeed, of some at least among those who are associated with his ideal; but I am bound frankly to say that I think it a loathsome nightmare, the concept of a man driven beyond himself by the grim impact of war. It is an ideal which would break every bond which now links us to the America of Roosevelt; it would drive to despair, as it was realised, every man and woman capable of a rational magnanimity. And as it became our programme it would attract to its service every element in the community prepared to accept the evil philosophy of power for the sake of power. As it gathered strength, it would deny and denounce those who stood by those principles of civilised living for which, for over two thousand years, men have battled so nobly. Its economics would become the economics of a permanent state of seige. Its ethics would assume the shape of those outlaw immoralities which, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler erected into a system and a procedure. It would make us, in fact, the very thing we are struggling to destroy. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that no doctrine more ugly has ever been offered to Englishmen. We are not entitled to condemn a generation to death that hate may engender this pitiless barbarism.

HAROLD J. LASKI

JAPANESE ORIENTATION

[The following is the first of two articles by Mr. E. J. Harrison who has lived for twenty years in Japan and who is the author of works on the life and military organisation of Japan.]

FOR the purpose of this article, the ethical aspects, the rights and wrongs of the present conflict in the Far East do not immediately concern me. My sole object is to tell why the Japanese are perhaps the most dangerous and redoubtable of all fighting men, and as such likely to give us relatively more trouble than the Germans before we can bring them to their knees. An intelligent examination of what may be called the psychological implications of their traditional intrepidity might well have placed us on our guard. Our own military observers of an older generation can hardly have forgotten how on one occasion, when a Russian warship intercepted a Japanese transport in the Yellow Sea, the Japanese officers, summarily and contemptuously rejecting a demand to surrender, gathered on deck and to a man committed *hara-kiri*. Although no doubt in Western minds such an act may seem insane fanaticism, it assuredly cannot justly be dubbed the act of cravens. Foemen prepared to go to those lengths rather than yield are not to be lightly regarded.

It is also a mistake to suppose that Japanese leaders and the Japanese masses are conscious of the turpitude and degradation which, on the strength of our own more recent standards of international morality, the spokesmen of the Democracies impute to them, more vocally than ever since Japan's "felon stroke" at Pearl Harbour on that fateful and historic Sunday, December 7th, 1941. Far from it. In the estimation of the majority of ordinarily decent, kindly, easy-going residents of Dai Nippon, all's fair in war if not in love, and the fellow who lets a potential or prospective adversary catch him bending is, in the vernacular, *baka na yatsu*, and not even unlucky. Ruse and stratagem are the very essence of the fighting arts, as practised in Japan, and always legitimate.

Taking a perfectly dispassionate and objective view, are not we Westerners ourselves largely to blame for having so successfully taught our former Japanese pupils the lesson that the final arbitrament must rest with physical force? The first practical demonstration of this melancholy truth was given by Commodore Perry in 1853, and the Japanese have never really forgotten it or forgiven the people which produced the teacher. Chickens have a nasty habit of coming home to roost, and since that day the Japanese have bettered the instruction.

From the earliest times the Samurai or Shizoku class have monopolised political and military influence. The heimin or commoners can hardly be said to have counted at all in the national counsels save as the milch cow of the tax gatherer. Traditional contempt for trade and tradesmen was formerly expressed by the favourite Samurai gesture of picking up coin with chopsticks to avoid direct contamination, and the privilege of wearing two swords, the long katana and the short wakizashi, was always restricted to that class. Japan's formal abandonment of feudalism took place only seventy years ago, and subsequent events have plainly shown that its spirit has survived the adoption of the so-called constitution of 1889, and that insistence upon the nominal rights conferred by that instrument, if carried beyond a certain point, may easily entail very unpleasant consequences for the indiscreetly polemical. From almost time immemorial assassination, usually with cold steel, has been a recognised form of political protest in Japan. It has been, and still is, practised by individuals and secret societies. Nominally illegal, it is generally condoned or even admired as affording practical proof of the assassins' firmly held convictions, whilst the penalties hitherto inflicted have entirely failed to act as an effective deterrent.

Respect for physical force as the ultimate appeal has ever been uppermost in Nipponese "ideology." Early in the present century the tendency of philosophic teaching was that might is the only source of right, and that strength is essential to extort respect from others. The conception of Pan-Asianism, the teachings of the Tenrikyo sect concerning the predominance of the Land of the Rising Sun in the near future over the entire world (*Japan über alles*, in fact) had even then penetrated deeply into Japanese society, in conjunction with reverence for the Emperor, which emanates from the well-springs of the national cult of Shintoism. Contempt for death and the principle of self-sacrifice for the welfare of the country, the legacy of the Samurai, are all closely related to the "might is right" doctrine. Finally, we have the distinctive feature of the Japanese—their imitativeness under the influence of victorious wars and external diplomatic successes, which have developed into rivalry with the white races. These factors are the dynamic forces which are moving the masses to promote the official policy of aggression for the extension of the Empire. In Japan the rôle which in Germany to-day is played by Hitler ostensibly devolves upon the Emperor, styled Tenno or Tenshi Sama, not Mikado, which is an obsolete term. It is true that the repositories of physical power have nearly always been the Satsuma and Choshu clansmen, but since the abolition of the Shogunate in 1868, these ambitious warriors have found it convenient to substitute the Imperial figurehead for that of the deposed Shogun, and to concede to the exalted Imperial office the shadow of an authority whose substance in the final analysis rests with them. At the same time, the popular reverence accorded to the Imperial office is still so real that even the clansmen must reckon with it and scrupulously avoid the dangerous reproach of interference with the unrestricted exercise of the Imperial prerogative. Since the beginning of the twentieth century the most striking manifestations of official Japan have been seen in a crude form of State socialism in conjunction with militaristic paternalism. There has never been a popular revolution in Japan, as we understand the term; the common people had no part in the restoration of the Emperor during the early sixties of last century, and all the political reforms which heralded the birth of New Japan were initiated by the aristocracy. The Constitution itself appears as the gracious and voluntary gift of the Emperor to his duly grateful subjects. That very Constitution is an admirable illustration of how rights may be ostensibly granted in one breath and abrogated in another. The Diet has authority to do certain things so long as those things are satisfactory to the Emperor and his advisers; otherwise, judging from a fairly long line of precedents, the Diet is likely to disappear for the time being, while the Ministry remains. In practice as well as in theory the Emperor chooses his own advisers, who need have no connection with any political party and who may even be destitute of a majority in the Lower House.

E. J. HARRISON

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Mrs. M. Tannahill.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Noel Coward is now making a film about the life of a destroyer and he himself is playing the captain. In an interview given to a contemporary, he explained: "I'm only playing it because I want to show how ordinary I can be—not that smart, witty Noel Coward, but just a commonplace, simple human being.—"Pertinent and Otherwise" in *Bulletin*.

The durability of a good Fur Coat is much greater than that of a Cloth Coat. The war in the Pacific has curtailed wool imports, thus further limiting cloth supplies. Considered by some as a luxury solely, a Fur Coat is, obviously, an Effort in the National Economy.—Advert. *Birmingham Post*.

For the first time the general public in the United States are being given the opportunity to buy shares in the famous New York banking firm of J. P. Morgan and Co., Inc. . . .

Although this block of shares represents only 8½ per cent. of the company's total capital stock, its sale will broaden the ownership of the company, which will thus move closer towards the democratic ideal.—*Daily Telegraph*.

Woodbridge (Suffolk) Urban Council has written to the Ministry of Supply drawing attention to excessive waste of paper by Government departments in the issuing of needless forms and routine correspondence.

Councillor Johnson cited a case in which to obtain a free licence for agricultural machinery an applicant completed 84 forms in duplicate.—Report in *Manchester Guardian*.

A LONDON DIARY

"Have you been measured for your millstone yet?" said a voice on the phone on Monday morning, and that, I found, was the common reaction to Mr. Churchill's broadcast. Why suggest that those who urge obviously vital changes on the Prime Minister are the occasion of stumbling? Coming up in the train I met a very well-known public servant who said that Mr. Churchill's broadcast had made him so angry that he could not sleep: "He just does not understand what we are all trying to say." Tested out on a village policeman and a couple of labourers in the pub, the reaction was similar. The notion they got hold of most clearly in the broadcast was that Mr. Churchill intended to go on running everything himself and that he regarded it as treachery or wickedness to suggest that the interests of the nation were not necessarily the same as the interests of the present Government. There was great human appeal in Mr. Churchill's speech; it made one feel once again that here was a courageous leader struggling with adversity. But any conception that the Prime Minister might have been wrong about anything, that critics might be seriously worried about the responsibility of leaving him in charge of the war without any practical assurance that he was going to make necessary changes—these were totally absent. Strange that Mr. Churchill should not realise the dilemma he presents to all his supporters; how are we to go on supporting him, however much we love him, if he will not sack the obvious incompetents, if he refuses to fight a twentieth-century People's War, preferring to live in the days of Chatham and merely repeating that he alone can save the country? Can he not (just to take a single instance that might capture his imagination) see the difference between British policy in Malaya and General MacArthur's policy in the Philippines?

* * *

The situation is more difficult than June, 1940. Then there was one over-riding danger, but plenty of political capital to fall back upon. To-day everyone discusses the right men for a small War Cabinet. Bevin is still rightly regarded as a big and necessary man. Beaverbrook would probably spend much of his energy usefully in the United States; co-operation with Washington is not wholly easy. Sir Stafford Cripps is the one universal nominee for a position in a new small War Cabinet. On Wednesday he spoke in the most outspoken way to the largest private meeting of Members that anyone remembers. I gather that he met with no opposition from any quarter.

* * *

The best calculation I can make would give the Japanese control of Rangoon in a fortnight and make the invasion of Ceylon or similar action almost immediately possible. That we have not the air or sea command, or the modern weapons or the technique to hold the Japanese in a country which is not prepared to fight for the British Raj has been conclusively shown in Malay. That a people nationally roused can hold out against mechanised invasion, even if they have very little to fight with, has been shown by the Chinese, who in the early days of Japanese invasion were expected by all our military pundits to be immediately overrun. The question I have heard discussed this week is whether even at this desperately last minute anything can be done to organise popular resistance to the Japanese in India. Three points arise. First, have we reached that point of crisis which may even compel the Premier, the Viceroy and the British machine to recognise that India can only be defended if Indians defend it, and if they do it will be India, and not for British rule, they will fight for? Secondly, is it technically possible to "arm the masses" of India in a few weeks or months? Late as it is, some who know about the manufacture of hand-grenades, tommy-guns and the rest tell me that it can be done extremely quickly, often with very primitive plant, and might still be done effectively, if no time is wasted. It would be a tremendous job of organisation and need great enthusiasm. Thirdly, and most important, if an effort were made to create a popular Indian Home Guard, would the Indians, in fact, want to fight?

* * *

Too much notice should not be paid to talk about the so-called "martial races." They are merely those whom Britain selected and trained to fight. As for Hindu-Moslem differences, if power were actually given to Nehru, Jinnah would have to collaborate in defence policy. But what is Nehru's position? His statements have not been clear-cut, but he has said that Congress could not refuse responsibility for India's self-defence. As I read it, he is prepared for any measures of defence, but knows that you can never evoke popular Indian sentiment in favour of defence of the British Raj. He stands, that is, for Indian self-defence, and in that he would appear to be realistic. Next, after talking to people who know India well, I am persuaded that the doctrine of non-violence would quickly give way to popular self-defence if there were Japanese invasion and the Indians were armed. The Japanese are intensely unpopular in India, but there is evidence that Tokio's propaganda, now aided by the loss of face at Singapore, is making headway in India. Against this we have to put Britain's almost total failure to make any propaganda which encourages the Indian to hope for freedom as long as Britain is there, while the Japanese may be relied on to make the most encouraging offers to India to enter into the "co-prosperity sphere" in which the coloured races under Japanese leadership are to drive the white man out of Asia. Some of us have been asking for Indian freedom, both for itself and as a method of winning the war ever since the war started. What I most fear is confusion. Better for the Indian to maintain non-violence unless he is given a real chance of self-defence.

* * *

A story is told about the visit of a British ship to Russian waters. I find that it particularly appeals to members of the Forces. It is said that at a Soviet dinner the Russian Admiral got drunk and abused his English guests. The incident was quickly closed, the Admiral was obviously drunk, and the British took no notice. The next day, however, he had disappeared, only to be found not long after scrubbing the decks as a common sailor. One of the English officers commiserated with him, explaining that the alliance had not been in any way in danger by what had been regarded as a mere slip at a convivial party. The Admiral is said to have remarked, "Oh, it's all right. It is what I deserve for being stupid. I am allowed to work my way up to the top again in seven years." People approve of the system which promotes for merit and sacks for mistakes; even if it is not always fair to the individual the rough and ready up-and-down method seems preferable to stagnant gentlemanliness. Again I have heard much favourable comment on a little newspaper paragraph about Soviet officials who were sent to gaol for delays in paying compensation due to soldiers' widows, sum up much popular feeling at the moment. Why does Mr. Churchill always have to find honorific positions in which incompetence can still play a deadening part? Is it impossible to have a Cabinet which will get rid of that top layer of inefficient routineers? Just below this layer of elderly rot one meets energetic and able younger men, some of them almost beside themselves with frustration. They have understood the kind of war this is, they are free from the prejudices of the old imperialism and they are torn between murderous and suicidal impulses as they watch every intelligent idea being pigeon-holed by some War Office dug-out, potential victories being turned into defeats and thousands of brave young soldiers, sailors and airmen unnecessarily sacrificed to an entrenched vanity which they cannot expose because to do so would be to give away official secrets.

* * *

The press attack upon the £20 fees paid to Brains Trust members is more than a mere publicity stunt. The pay is high; so are the fees paid to crooners and comedians. That is not the point. The Brains Trust is very popular. It gives, in a lively way, the discussion and intelligent interest which the press has no room for now. Some sections of the press are always jealous and frightened of the wireless. There is no destructive weapon more difficult to parry than the bogus attack upon the cost of anything considered highbrow or idealistic. The same press used it with deadly effect at a critical period in the history of the League of Nations—the "£300 for typists" campaign. The B.B.C. authorities will recognise this attack for what it is.

* * *

Lord Caldecote is now choosing a daily text for readers of the *Daily Sketch*. The appointment is fitting, but surely rather late. We have had to suffer the chaos of our defences and supplies; we have had to give Thomas Inskip one job after another before at last, in the fullness of time, he arrived at the one job for which nature had always intended him—choosing a Bible text for *Daily Sketch* readers.

* * *

The latest confusions that darken the mind of the editor of *Nineteenth Century* are the subject of some comment in an article by H. J. Laski this week. Let me retrieve another oddment from the same ragbag. In the *Nineteenth Century* for March, 1940, the same editor wrote, in an article on the Situation, as follows:

> The paradox of German-Russian relations is that Germany *with* Russia is weaker than Germany *without* Russia. The existence of the German-Russian Coalition gives the Allies the opportunity of winning the war sooner, with less sacrifice and more completely than if they were fighting the Germans only. But this is only true if the Allies seize the opportunity, and pass from the defensive to the offensive there where an offensive is possible—in Northern Europe, and, later on, in South-Eastern Europe.

Study this statement and its implications, and ask whether a better example can be found of how hate and prejudice can destroy judgment.

* * *

The story goes that Sikorski stayed at Jerusalem on his way to Moscow and there talked to a Rabbi about the war. The Rabbi held that the war might be won either by natural means or by a miracle. "And what are the natural means?" asked Sikorski. "Since our cause is just," said the Rabbi, "it would be natural to expect the intervention of Providence on our side." "Well," said Sikorski, "if Providential intervention is the natural way of achieving victory, how would it be won by a miracle?" "Clearly," said the Rabbi, "it would be miraculous if we won it by ourselves and without Divine intervention."

CRITIC

STILL THE STARS

A FRIEND of mine, who was in a country inn on Sunday after the surrender of Singapore had been announced, told me that all the men present were discussing the astrological predictions in one of the Sunday papers about world events, and, as a result of them, were expressing the rosiest possible opinions about the future. It would have seemed incredible fifty years ago that by 1942 astrology would have become one of the most popular stimulants of the English people as it is also the cheapest. There must be many thousands of men and women who find that it removes lassitude, depression, and that tired feeling more effectively than anything that can be bought in a bottle. High o'er the fence leaps Sunny Jim: a breakfast food used to be the force that raised him—now it is the weekly message from the stars. Fish-liver oil and carrots may serve to protect him from colds, but fish-liver oil and carrots are not things that turn a man from a pessimist into an optimist in the course of a few seconds. Only astrology can do that. Whisky itself is by comparison slow in producing results, and, besides, it is sometimes as difficult to get as cigarettes or matches. Only astrology is an immediate wonder-worker—costing twopence a go, and never in what is nowadays called short supply.

Probably the war has led to a spread of the belief in astrology, for in wartime particularly men grasp at even the frailest confirmation of their hopes. But astrology had become one of the popular cults many years before war broke out. Both in England and in America even business men have been consulting the stars for a considerable time past—men, it is stated, being addicted to astrology in greater numbers than women. I lunched during the years of peace with a railway director who told me that since he began to consult astrologers every important event in his life had been accurately predicted, and who sent me a mass of literature on the subject in the hope of converting me. Rich men in the United States have attributed their good fortune to the advice given to them by astrologers on their speculations. Astrologers, it appears, can foretell almost anything except the result of a horse-race. "To do that," explained a race-horse owner who is also a believer in astrology, "you would require to know the exact time of the birth of the horse, of the jockey, of the trainer, and of the owner, and the resulting calculation would be very complicated. Even then it would not be much good, for the time of the race is so short that it would be practically impossible for the favourable aspects to have their effect."

That does not seem to me to be quite logical. One may admit the difficulty of the calculation; but it ought surely to be no more impossible to foresee a horse's winning a race by a short head than a new born baby's having a severe accident to his side nine years later.

After all, what Spiritualism can do astrology ought to be able to do; and I once met a believer in Spiritualism—another prosperous business man, by the way—who told me that he had gone to a race-meeting with a medium who knew nothing about horses and that the medium had correctly foretold the results of the first four races. "After that," he declared, "he wouldn't go on. He said it was making a wrong use of his gift." Whether the medium had a gift or not I do not know: but he afterwards became the subject of a book in which he was denounced as an impostor.

One of the greatest difficulties about some of these cults is that it is impossible for most of us to distinguish between a practitioner who is an impostor and an honest man. There are quacks even in so highly organised a profession as medicine; and, even if we agreed that astrology is a science, we should still have to admit that it is a science which gives almost unbounded scope to the impostor. Any man who thinks it will pay can set up as an astrologer just as any man, whether he knows anything about horses or not, can sell racing tips on Ascot Heath. Obviously, there is a mass of genuine believers in astrology and some of these become professional astrologers; but even as regards them we cannot be certain that their reading of the stars is the right one. Doctors often fail to diagnose correctly troubles in the human body, and troubles in the heavenly bodies must be even easier to misjudge. Astrologers may claim that theirs is an exact science; but their prophecies since the war broke out hardly support this claim. After all the stars foretold through one of their scrutinizers that Hitler's last year of power would be 1940—or was it 1941? Again on a certain Sunday morning after one had heard the news on the wireless that Germany had launched her invasion of Russia, one opened the day's paper and discovered an astrological announcement that Germany's clash with Russia would not happen just yet. Such misreadings of the heavens were disturbing to those who had been finding comfort in prophecies of good fortune in love, health and business. If the stars can be wrong about the fate of empires, can they be trusted in their foresight about so insignificant a person as oneself or about days which one will find "not unfavourable for a little mild speculation?"

Many starry predictions, of course, come true. I remember once asking in an article whether any of the Old Moore's Almanacs for 1914 had mentioned the fact that there was going to be a war; and I was immediately sent a copy of one of them which predicted the war quite clearly. I doubt, however, whether the hits are numerous enough to make up for the misses—numerous enough to justify "a well-known politician" who has made a study of the subject in saying: "I think that those people who do not believe in astrology are fools." Still, no doubt, many of us, including business men and colonels, will go on hoping that the good things the stars foretell will come true—that, for example, as was prophesied last year, "the 'cease fire' may be in February, 1942," and that "by the autumn of 1942 life will once more be on normal lines in Britain."

Belief in the influences of the stars is usually put down to wishful thinking, and undoubtedly wishful thinking helps. At the same time, it may partly spring from a sense of mystery—a suspicion that there are mysterious forces in the universe which science to-day does not take into account. Those who have lived in the East seem to be peculiarly susceptible to this sense of mystery; and on one occasion Rudyard Kipling was bold enough to suggest before the Royal Society of Medicine that astrology might be called in as an aid to the art of healing. Observing that "we have been driven headlong to abandon our conceptions of life, motion and matter," he went on:

> Is it then arguable that we may still mistake secondary causes for primary ones, and attribute to instant and visible agents of disease unconditioned activities, which, in truth, depend on some breath drawn from the motion of the universe through occupied space?
>
> The idea is wildly absurd? Quite true. But what *does* that matter if any fraction of any idea helps towards mastering even one combination in the great time-locks of Life and Death?
>
> Suppose, then, at some future time, when the bacteriologist and the physicist are for the moment at a standstill, wouldn't it be interesting if they took their problem to the astronomers, and—in modern scientific language, of course—put to them Nicholas Culpeper's question?

Nicholas Culpeper, it should be explained, on being called in to attend a girl supposed by her physician to be sick of the plague, asked the question at what hour she had taken to her bed, and, after making the horoscope, declared that her illness was "just smallpox." The girl, we are told, recovered.

In spite of this persuasive story, I confess I should feel nervous if I found that the doctor who was attending me in an illness was an astrologer and was consulting the stars instead of the pharmacopœia as to the best means of bringing down my temperature. I shrink instinctively from magicians, except as entertainers—possibly, because at the back of my mind is a half-belief in their magic. On the other hand, if I were lying ill and read in a Sunday paper that according to the stars my health would take a turn for the better on Tuesday, I should be considerably cheered. This would assist my wishful thinking, and my half-credulity here, even while I pretended to tell myself that it was all nonsense, might hasten my recovery. That I am a wishful thinker is proved, I suspect, by the fact that the only astrological prophecies to which I pay any serious attention are the optimistic ones. I sympathise, indeed, with the men in the country inn, as they rejoice in the happy endings foretold in their Sunday newspapers. Perhaps it is because happy endings have become so unpopular in fiction that people have gone in search of them to astrology. Happy endings we must have—if not in life, at least (occasionally) in print.

Y. Y.

THREE POEMS

LOVERS IN THE MOUNTAINS

FRESH as the foam of torrents from the snow,
Dark-soft as footsteps in the woods below,
Complete as sunlight pouring from above,
New as young vine-leaves, is our bodies' love.

THE DOUBTING SELF

TO mark the road with clear accustomed words,
I found no notice nailed
That darkening day.
Only my heart had knowledge of the way
As certain as a migratory bird's—
But my heart failed.

LATE HOME

THE winds are out in the abysm of night,
The blown trees stoop;
But man invented fire and candle-light,
And man invented soup.

FRANCES CORNFORD

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INQUEST

IT is no pleasure in a time of woe
The authors of misfortune to arraign.
There is no rapture in "I told you so";
There is no profit in a vengeful vein.
But if, when stricken with a mortal blow,
The causes of decease we ascertain,
The court of inquest instantly in action
Affords a melancholy satisfaction.

SAGITTARIUS

THE MOVIES

"Film and Reality," to be shown for schools, film societies and units of the Forces.

"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," at the Empire.

"Hellzapoppin," at Leicester Square.

"Great Guns," at London Pavilion.

It is a great pity that Cavalcanti's *Film and Reality*, compiled from the library of the British Film Institute, cannot be shown publicly; for it is first-rate criticism, and criticism of any sort in the cinema is rare. I shall discuss Cavalcanti's argument for realism another week (space permitting).

If the standards of *Film and Reality* were generally accepted, we should cease to have films like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Hellzapoppin* and the new Laurel and Hardy. None of these subscribes noticeably to any doctrines of reality. They aim at entertaining, and succeed. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* has been made with a nice sense of what is hair-raising. The transformation from Jekyll to Hyde, accomplished in close-up, is less horrific and more plausible than usual, and, since the features are Mr. Spencer Tracy's, both conditions are a pleasure to contemplate. His Hyde, kicking up hell in a music-hall or loping swiftly through the fog, is authentic *grand-guignol*, and Ingrid Bergmann appeals as the chief victim of his malice.

Hellzapoppin is post-Marxian and post-Maskelyne. One device—stepping down from the screen—is brilliantly exploited; the actors start out of stills, talk back at the projector man who is running them through, and the audience itself is button-holed at Leicester Square. A couple of appeals, flashed on the screen and asking one Stinky Miller to go home, are followed after a while by the silhouette of a small boy apparently making his way out. No scene is ever finished, and there is a moment of backchat between two comedians, one invisible below the belt and the other from the waist up, who move off together. Interruptions, people walking through doorways and coming out disguised the other side, visual jokes and magic of all kinds carry the Marx technique several steps forward. It's not so much surrealism as crazy-gangdom, with a musical comedy background effectively broken up. Good comedians, Olsen and Johnson, Mischa Auer and Martha Raye; S.A. by several lovelies and a water ballet; bright cracks and tunes; and perhaps the best turn is provided by a company of Harlem jitterbugs.

Comedy of the older kind still triumphs with Laurel and Hardy, and the few surrealist tricks in *Great Guns* —the electric bulb that only shines when disconnected, and the incident of the endless plank—have a special Olly flavour. These classic heroes, whose adventures touch the fringe of *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, now find themselves in the army. Their parade manners are a wonderful display of intimate embarrassment. On manœuvre they bump in cars and are bombed by flour-bags. The situation is enhanced by camp intrigues, growling sergeants and a pet crow. They have never been funnier. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Key Largo," at the A.D.C. Theatre, Cambridge.

The Cambridge University amateurs have had the enterprise to give the first performance in this country of a new play by Maxwell Anderson, the author of *Winterset*. Key Largo is not a muddled metaphor from music, but the name of a little harbour in Florida, where the action of the play is laid, except for a prologue in the Spain of the Civil War. The theme is not altogether unlike that of *Thunder Rock*: an American volunteer in the Republican Army deserts when he sees the war is lost, thinking life better than a useless sacrifice to "honour." Hunted by his conscience, he visits the family of a friend who preferred to die in Spain; and discovers this family the prey of a gangster. The play ends with his sacrificing his life, after all, in the cause of justice and liberty. Though the dialogue is largely a pæan to courage filled with discussions about "life," "honour," and "reason," the virtues of the play are principally those of a melodrama: it grips. It is written in blank verse so relaxed that it sounds merely like uncommonly rhythmical prose, which makes good theatrical diction. The more lyrical passages may usually be embarrassing, but the play proves that blank verse is no less well suited to modern melodrama than to the blood-and-thunder thrillers of the Jacobean dramatists. *Key Largo* is more interesting than any play we have seen in London since *Thunder Rock*, and ought to be given here. (We doubt, however, whether professionals are available to give an equally satisfactory performance.) Acting, production, settings and lighting were all amazingly polished. Mr. Donald Bain, who took over the second most important part at 24 hours' notice, performed prodigies, and Mr. Richard Bennett in the chief role was at least as good as Mr. Redgrave in *Thunder Rock*.

The Country Wife, at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead.

Wycherley's elegant improprieties delight in some moods; this week they seemed too trivial to open the door to spiritual escape. The play needs the most finished acting. Several of the men were good, but, as is natural in the circumstances, it proved easier to find female than male talent. The Country Wife (Chattie Salaman) is deliciously played, and her sister Alithea (Patricia Dent) is also excellent. The group of young actors now playing at the Everyman are working on novel lines—sharing the jobs of producing and acting, and also of serving refreshments and cleaning the theatre. They spend most of the day training themselves as actors; they hold that good plays are always wanted and that new plays worth acting will arrive. *The Doll's House* comes next on their list. *Candida* is in course of preparation.

Artists International Association at R.B.A. Galleries.

The Artists International Association began with a group who perceived that the Spanish War was the first campaign in a world war that would profoundly affect the future of art. Unluckily, good artists often have bad politics, but it was a fortunate, symbolical and not altogether fortuitous fact that Picasso was the painter of the Republic, Sert the champion of Franco. The A.I.A. has no rigid æsthetic creed, but it seems not to include any members of the Royal Academy. The exhibition is very various not only in style but in merit, many of the pictures being quite amateurish, as they are bound to be in so large an assembly. Among the best-known painters represented are Lucien Pissarro, Paul Nash, Ethel Walker, E. le Bas, Alison Debenham, Lowes Luard, John Banting, Kenneth Rowntree, Patricia Preece, Henry Carr, Ben Nicholson, John Tunnard, Claude Rogers, Kenneth Martin and Fred Uhlman. Among the less known contributors few show any remarkable gift.

Paintings at the Redfern Gallery.

One room at the Redfern Gallery is given to paintings by Christopher Ward, whose works, often individually very agreeable in a mixed show, look unhappily superficial and voguish whenever they are shown in bulk. But the next room contains a delightful anthology of English and French paintings. Camille Pissarro's *L'Automne* is the noblest Impressionist picture we have seen for some while; the Sickert of a woman's head and the Rouaults are first-rate pictures of their size, and the two Bonnards contrast with one another very curiously. The Gilman portrait, most subtle, painterly and original, deserves a place in a museum.

WHAT MUST BE DONE?

[The following communications from a member of the 1922 Committee and Mr. Tom Wintringham excellently summarise the arguments now proceeding in Westminster and the country.]

SIR,—"What shall be done to give new expression to the cool and unshaken determination with which the British people confronts the calamities that its arms have suffered in Malaya, not to speak of the set-back in Libya and the success of the German naval exploit in the Channel?"

These are the words of the remarkable editorial in the *Times* of February 14th. The *Times* urges "a fresh start," to include a change in Ministers and a War Cabinet of men freed from administration. I also propose a fresh start—by the formation of an Opposition.

An Opposition is necessary, in the form of an alternative political grouping stating clearly to the world a policy different from that of the present Government, and containing men capable of carrying out that policy. No change in Mr. Churchill's team of ministers, and no formation from amongst them of any shape of War Cabinet, will alter the basic policy of the present Government, or alter it in time, on two vital issues: India and the European Revolution.

All our guns at Penang faced the wrong way: towards the sea, rather than towards the mainland. All our guns in India are facing the wrong way: towards the Northwest Frontier rather than towards the East. Much worse than this, our plans for the defence of Penang were non-existent and our plans for the defence of India scarcely exist. This tiny island, that we lost without a fight, could only have been defended as the comparable island of Corregidor, commanding Manila Bay, is being defended, by a policy that arms the local population, gives them their independence, and reinforces them by Regular troops under officers aware of what is happening in the world. In the same way India can only be defended if it is given exactly what the Americans gave the Philippines.

Singapore could have been held by making an island "Tobruk" out of Penang, and a coastal "Tobruk" of Mersing on the other side of Malaya. The official observer with the Australian forces in Malaya has stated (*Times*, 2.2.42): "The withdrawal from the Mersing area was the hardest blow to the A.I.F., for it was here that they have spent the last four months building defences and making the area almost impregnable. The Japanese advance down the west coast caused the abandonment of the defences because of the danger to our flank." These two areas held by Regulars, together with an armed native population and the Chinese troops offered to and refused by us, could have held Singapore; there was never any chance under conditions of modern warfare of holding Singapore island alone; and the reinforcements sent there, like those sent to Hong Kong, are sacrificed to provide a gallant gesture.

In other words the calamities in Malaya are of our own making. So is the "check" in Libya, as I predicted in an article written at the beginning of December. As for the "mortifying" picture of German warships parading through the Straits of Dover, I ask those interested to read again the accounts of the sinking of the Repulse and the Prince of Wales. The Japanese had dive-bombers to engage, to disturb, and partially to destroy, the anti-aircraft armament of our battleships. Then they put in their torpedo planes. We have no dive-bombers; we have never wanted them because they are instruments for air support; our Air Ministry has been allowed to concentrate all these years on the aeroplane as a long-range strategic weapon, not on the aeroplane as close-support artillery. Our bombers, designed for high-level bombing and incapable of dive-bombing, could not see the enemy ships when high; when they dropped their bombs from a low level, these bombs could not penetrate because falling slowly. A dive-bomber hurls the bomb; a level bomber drops it gently, and it only picks up speed as it falls.

It is not a question of our ability to have forces, naval, air or military, at all parts of the globe at all times. It is a question of our refusal to learn modern

warfare, and our refusal to accept the help of the "four-fifths of the world" that is on our side. Unless we now accept this help, in India and in Europe and among our own people, we shall be defeated. With Singapore lost to us, we face the danger of losing the three other naval bases that matter between Aden and Sydney. These are Surabaya in Java, Trincomali in Ceylon, and Port Darwin in Northern Australia. At the same time the Burma Road is threatened; and even if the Chinese can hold it for us, the Bay of Bengal may fall to Japanese control.

Against these dangers our hope is the offensive. The theory of the present Government, which will be unchanged by Cabinet reshuffles, is that we must remain on the defensive until we have produced so many weapons that we can turn to the attack. The speed of modern war has made this theory ludicrous. To defend is to lose. The mobility of modern weapons, the plane and the tank, multiply their force. A well-organised offensive is less costly, much less dangerous, than the defensive to-day. The first point, therefore, that I believe necessary, in the platform of the opposition to the present Government is that we should plan offensive action, in 1942, in Europe and in the East, together with the powers now taking the offensive in these areas: Russia and China. The second point is that we should so change our policies on production and propaganda as to arm the populations able and willing to fight with us as equals but unwilling to do so as subordinates. And not arm them with pikes.

The third point is that we should work fully and frankly for a European revolution against Fascism and all its allies. And we should state as the aim of this revolution—an aim not to be imposed, but we hope to be agreed—the organisation of a united Europe, in name and fact a Commonwealth. The word Commonwealth so fully describes, not only the war aims of the forces able to defeat Hitler, but also the method by which they can organise their resources for that victory, that I think it should be the name of our new political grouping.

And Mr. Churchill? For a year after Dunkirk he was the symbol of Britain's endurance. To-day his policy to India, his ignorance of the forces at work in Europe, and his fear of those reactionaries who will do anything except get off our backs, makes him, as he is, one of the main obstacles to a democratic victory. As such he should be opposed openly, in spite of the fact that his immense popularity exists and has been deserved. He believes in keeping things essentially as they are; the life of our people depends on great changes, not after the war but to win the war. Opposing Churchill, leader of the Conservative Party, any movement must at first look small and powerless; but movements as apparently small and powerless, when formed, are now ruling Europe, Russia, China and the United States.

It is possible.

Kilmurry, TOM WINTRINGHAM
Eaton Park Road, Cobham.

SIR,—One result of the recent series of military disasters may be that the underlying issues between the House of Commons and the Prime Minister will be plainly and publicly stated—at last. In categorical terms Mr. Churchill has demanded that responsibility for the misdeeds of his administration and the shortcomings of his colleagues shall be placed on his shoulders alone. This request will not be granted. The House of Commons is determined to retain Mr. Churchill as Prime Minister. It is equally determined that certain things shall be done, and certain changes must be made. If Mr. Churchill continues to ignore his parliamentary critics, and refuses to make the necessary changes, there will be a head-on collision between the executive and the legislature. And the legislature will win.

Mr. Churchill was given supreme power nearly two years ago, by forty dissident Government supporters, at a moment of acute crisis. He formed his Government under severe pressure, with great rapidity. Posts were allocated, both inside and outside the Cabinet, on a strictly party basis. In the circumstances it is inconceivable that the best available talent was obtained, or that a round peg was found for every round hole. Nevertheless, Mr Churchill has not since seen fit to make any radical changes in the personnel of his administration. The late Lord Oxford once observed that the most essential quality in a Prime Minister was that he should be a good butcher. If this is desirable in time of peace, it is vital in time of war. Mr. Churchill has carried personal loyalty to mediocre subordinates to a point at which it has become a positive danger to the State.

Next comes the question of policy. Rightly or wrongly the House is profoundly disturbed about production. It is unfair to say of the Labour Party that it is opposed to a more drastic labour policy, or of the Conservative Party that it is opposed to the conscription of wealth and property wherever necessary. Vast omnibus powers over both labour and property were given to the Government by a unanimous vote of the House within a few weeks of its formation. They have never been adequately used, and members of all parties feel most strongly that the time has now arrived when they should be—without respect to persons or organisations, however powerful they may be. Then there is India. It is generally accepted that the Indian war effort is far below that required by the magnitude of her present peril, and that this is primarily due to the refusal of her ablest political leaders to co-operate. It is felt that a great chance was missed in the summer of 1940, when a generous gesture on the part of the British Government might have gone far to dissolve political hostility in India, and to isolate the extremists. The cause of this was not the attitude of "die-hard" Tories in the House of Commons, but a supine acquiescence in Mr. Churchill's personal prejudices on the part of the Labour members of the War Cabinet. Now the opportunity recurs.

Thirdly, there is the question of the machinery of government. No one outside the Cabinet will maintain to-day that this has proved adequate to the tasks imposed by world war. There is confusion at the summit, and inexcusable delay in obtaining decisions on major aspects of policy. This is due, in some measure, to lack of co-ordination, to a multiplicity of inter-Departmental Committees, and to the overlapping of certain Departments the functions of which dictate amalgamation. I refer particularly to the Ministries of Supply and Aircraft Production, Agriculture and Food. The time and energy wasted by these Departments in argument with each other would be very much better spent in devising and concerting measures to increase total production, and defeat the enemy. But the main cause of the trouble is the character and composition of the present War Cabinet. The appointment of Lord Beaverbrook to "co-ordinate" production, with inadequate powers and a status equal but not superior to that of the Minister of Labour, is no solution to the problem. The arguments in favour of a small War Cabinet of not more than five or six Ministers without portfolio are simply overwhelming.

When the new Cabinet is constituted, its members will be selected on merit, and not on account of their association with political parties which have ceased to have any meaning for the vast majority of people, particularly those now serving in the armed forces.

Finally, there is the thorny problem of the higher direction of war strategy. Since May, 1940, this has been confided to the Prime Minister, assisted by the Chiefs of Staff. On the face of it, the Service Ministers are allowed to play little or no part; and the members of the War Cabinet (most of whom are immersed in the details of their own departmental work) can do little but acquiesce in such decisions as may be reached, and presented to them, by the Prime Minister, with the support of his technical advisers.

It is necessary, at this point, to speak a little bluntly. As an inspiration Mr. Churchill is superb—without parallel or peer. As a strategist he fails to convince. It was not strategy that saved us in 1940. Three things combined to bring us through that hour of mortal peril—the prowess of our fighter pilots; the courage, determination, leadership, and rhetoric of the Prime Minister; and (last but not least) Hitler's decision to turn south to Paris instead of west to London, after Dunkirk. Mr. Churchill has had more than his share of bad luck, both in the last war and in this. Still, the list of evacuations with which he has been directly associated is formidable. And it is astonishing that he should be so reluctant to share responsibility in a field where (on his own showing) luck so often plays the predominant part.

What of those upon whose judgment he mainly depends? The Chief of the Imperial General Staff has held his appointment for too short a period to enable any judgment of value to be formed. But of the First Sea Lord, Sir Dudley Pound, it can and must be said that for a long time past he has failed to command the confidence of the younger school of naval officers. And of Sir Charles Portal, that he stands or falls by the efficacy of the weapon upon which, to the detriment of other branches of the Air Service, he has lavished so much thought and care and enthusiasm, namely, Bomber Command. All that can be said at the moment is that the results so far obtained do not appear to have justified the enormous expenditure of effort, of material, and of personnel, involved. The most serious charge that can be brought against Mr. Churchill in his capacity as Minister of Defence is that he has failed to impose upon the three Services an effective co-operation by land, sea and air in any way comparable to that achieved by the enemy. Nevertheless, I do not think the House of Commons would willingly see him give up this important office. What it would like to see is a member of the new War Cabinet, of acknowledged ability, charged with the specific duty of co-ordinating the Fighting Services, under the general direction of the Prime Minister.

There is no reason why Mr. Churchill should not accept the views of the House of Commons, which, although sadly "dated," does faithfully represent the views of the man in the street, and (more significantly) of the man in the Services on these matters, except that he resents criticism and appears to lack something of the ruthlessness of the Lloyd George of 1917. Take one example of many. Sir John Jellicoe commanded, in a far greater degree than does Sir Dudley Pound, the confidence and affection of the Navy. Yet when Mr. Lloyd George came to the conclusion that he was a tired man, and was holding up the development of the convoy system, he did not hesitate to dismiss him from the post of First Sea Lord, and to substitute a comparatively unknown Admiral. In his broadcast, last Sunday, Mr. Churchill rightly dwelt upon the mighty achievements of the Russian armies. But he did not touch upon the total conscription of man-power and of wealth which made those achievements possible, or upon the sense of "urgency" to which Sir Stafford Cripps has drawn attention. Instead, he referred—almost with a sigh of envy—to the lack of criticism of Stalin, and of the Soviet Government.

This is, to say the least of it, remarkable, coming from a man who owes his whole position and power to sustained and vehement criticism over a period of years. "Those who disrupt the national unity deserve a millstone round their necks." How true! But how tempting, and how false, to include amongst them those who criticise the Government. Mr. Churchill is the right, the inevitable Prime Minister. But it would be a dangerous mistake for him to assume that if, for any reason, he ceased to be Prime Minister we should lose the war. There is no lack of unity, or of purpose, amongst our people. It is up to Mr. Churchill to give them increased heart, and a greater sense of urgency, by deeds as well as words.

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Correspondence

THE SILENT REVOLUTION

SIR,—The article in your issue last week entitled "The Silent Revolution" describes in general terms a state of affairs which is widespread and of great significance. So far as any one person can judge these matters, my own observations agree entirely with those of your correspondent. In fact, as long ago as 1938 I published a pamphlet entitled "The Future of Party Politics," which pointed out that the traditional political party set up was not fulfilling the needs of the nation. At one time I hoped that National Labour would fill the vacuum and be the beginnings of a new kind of party. I joined it with this hope in my heart. The hope has not been realised.

The need for a new form of political organisation is great and will become urgent in the near future. Powerful vested interests will have to be fought and destroyed; cranks and near-Fascists will have to be excluded; the feet of idealists will have to be kept on the ground. A lot of hard practical thinking and planning needs doing. Paradoxical though it may sound, what is required is a political party which stands for the elimination of party politics.

House of Commons. STEPHEN KING-HALL

SIR,—May I endorse almost all your contributor has said?

For many months past I have been engaged in lecturing to the troops. I have addressed scores of meetings, both in London and the country, and many thousands of men, and have lost no opportunity of talking both to officers (whom I have found uniformly courteous and helpful) and to privates. There is a general desire among both classes, who are for the most part civilians in uniform, to return to civil life as soon as possible or in some cases to emigrate. While everyone recognises that demobilization cannot be carried out in a fortnight, very few are willing to continue in the Army "to police Europe." Old soldiers, some of them "dug-outs" of the last war, all say that the standard of intelligence, physique and discipline shows a great improvement on 1914-18, but I have been told of several cases where intelligent privates were unable to qualify for more responsible posts because they could not write! Two medical officers, both longing to get back to private practice, say that in England their job consists in attending to occasional sprains and bruises. "I have a thousand fit men on my hands," said one, "and hardly any drunkenness or venereal disease." The other told me no drunkenness and only three cases of venereal disease since he joined up.

Even professed Conservatives among officers say, as do all the men I have spoken to, that there must be great changes after the war. They are vague as to what changes, except "we cannot go back to the state of things before the war," which probably means different things to different people.

Above all, "Russian military successes and our own continued failures are having a most remarkable influence on the younger generation." Officers have assured me of this and it is evident from the questions asked after almost every lecture. It has received a great impetus from the return and speeches of Stafford Cripps. I have had to check discussion by asking, "Are we not getting seditious?" After the last lecture I gave on Russia, an eager group waylaid me, asking questions as to the future of this country (not Russia) which one of them told me, "We did not like to ask publicly as they are political."

One must of course be discreet and not mention persons or parties. The only criticism I have ever had from a commanding officer was because I referred by name to Lord Halifax; but there has been no objection hitherto to saying that in the seventeenth century we beheaded unsuccessful statesmen; now we make them ambassadors—a remark usually greeted with loud laughter.

ANOTHER PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE

APPROACHING INDIA

SIR,—Your remark, "What Britain asks of India is to fight, not for herself, but for the British Empire, under a Scottish nobleman," prompts two questions. (1) After Singapore, what? Rangoon, the Andamans and Nicobars—obviously. But, also, almost certainly, an attack soon on Trincomali. (2) The strain of the last war fell largely on one province, the Punjab, where in 1914 and 1915 was the Ghadr conspiracy, put down by some thirty hangings and other punishments (see Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India As I Knew It*, pp. 183-209), and after the war came Amritsar. But even Kut was a trifle beside Singapore. Anyone with the least knowledge of India can imagine what public opinion there is now like. That public opinion has to be mobilised for events which are coming. Is it safe to trust to the people's faith that the *Raj* is invincible and the Viceroy and his Council all-wise? Will Singapore even help in that intensified recruiting the crisis demands?

Our Premier has not replied to the appeal of Sapru and his fellow-Moderates. Where India is concerned, our Government goes on the principle of "sending a boy" (the smallest boy they can find) "to do a man's job." They stand by proposals now old, and even at first rejected by all Indian parties, and all we can expect is some reluctant and trivial modifications. As you say, "An empire so devoid of imagination and generosity will survive, if it does survive, by luck rather than leadership." What the situation demands is someone like Sir Stafford Cripps as Secretary of State, Sapru—a patriot, a strong Conservative, a Privy Councillor, *persona grata* with Princes and Moslems—as Viceroy, and Nehru as Premier of a National Government.

Oxford. EDWARD THOMPSON

EMPIRE WAR CABINET

SIR,—I must thank you for publishing on the 7th instant my letter urging the need for setting up the Imperial War Cabinet and for your article on the same subject in your current issue. The seriousness of the position is beyond words. That which has happened and is still happening in Burma, Singapore, and Polynesia underlines it; that which threatens to happen in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and upon their shores to peoples and lands and ships under the protection of the Union Jack underlines it even more heavily.

Your article showed up the confusion in illustrious minds upon the subject of an Imperial War Cabinet. There is to be an Imperial War Cabinet that is not an Imperial War Cabinet but a British War Cabinet, which admits Dominion representatives as subordinates to proffer pleas but excludes them from all participation in making decisions and executing them. And, as a shuffling step forward, it has now been announced that, with the Dominion representatives, representatives of India will also be admitted in this subordinate capacity. That, so far as it goes, is all to the good; but is it not again a case of "too little, too late"? To the Indian mind it will seem—now—a small thing beside the visit of the illustrious Chiang Kai Shek, whose aid the Empire has sought.

Possibly—perhaps even probably—this emasculated Imperial War Cabinet will be quietly allowed to attain to its full legitimate powers. The Dominions can scarcely be expected to accept it in its present humiliating guise. A great Empire, or Commonwealth of Nations, requires a representative sovereign governing body, as was fully realised in 1917, as its supreme consultative and executive authority. Britain as the greatest of the constituent nations, will naturally carry predominating weight. Britain's Premier, endowed by Britain with almost dictatorial powers, will naturally play the leading part in it, but there must be no confidence withheld, no topics banned and no decisions enforced without the acceptance of the equal nations represented in it.

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The old Imperialism is as dead as the dodo. The new Imperialism of 1917, taking its place, initiated a new Imperial Constitution on progressive and democratic lines which can no longer be safely ignored if the Empire is to be preserved. Seeing what we have seen, will anyone say that the Councils controlling the Empire during the last few painful years would not have been greatly enriched in scope and quality and insight by a strong and virile infusion of Dominion statesmanship? HUBERT GOUGH

IRISHMEN IN THE FORCES

SIR,—Critic states that "The number of those in Eire who have voluntarily joined the British Forces is, in fact, extraordinarily high—almost as high, I believe, in proportion to population as the corresponding figures for Northern Ireland."

The facts are that Northern Ireland, with a population of 1½ millions, has sent, in round figures, 26,000 volunteers to the Fighting Forces (more than in the war of 1914–1918), while Eire with a population of 2¾ millions has provided 7,000 volunteers. I agree—and this is not said in any sneering spirit—that the Eire figure is extraordinarily high, especially having regard to the special circumstances and to the fact that she has her own Army and other fighting forces. You will agree, I have no doubt, that the figure for Northern Ireland is equally good, if not better, particularly in view of the number of our men of military age who are engaged on vital war work, and are thus precluded from joining up.

We have no objection to giving full credit to Eire men who have joined up, but we should like to express regret that, contrary to facts, THE NEW STATESMAN should have lent itself to casting a slight upon Northern Ireland which our men are bound to feel. E. P. NORTHWOOD

Government of N. Ireland Agent in Great Britain.

[No slight of any kind was cast on Northern Ireland. As to the figures, those for Northern Ireland are, of course, within the official knowledge of our correspondent. We are informed on equally good authority that no figure is known for Eire and that Mr. Northwood's statement is based on necessarily imperfect information.—ED., *N.S. & N.*].

U.S.S.R. PROPAGANDA

SIR,—"Critic" expresses views on our attitude toward the German people and their Nazi rulers with which I can only express my fervent agreement.

But I wonder whether he takes the same view that I do of the Soviet attitude on the subject. Unless I am mistaken he misses the real significance of the quotations he gives from the Moscow broadcast of the high Soviet official, Ernest Fischer.

After making the point that no outsider can distinguish German anti-Nazis from the Nazis unless the former themselves make the distinction clear, Fischer says:

"By its own acts the German people must prove that it has nothing in common with Hitler . . . Sentiment is worth nothing when it is a matter of life and death. Action means everything . . . When on the coming day of judgment the terrible accusation is spoken: 'German hands burned my home, killed my child and tortured my wife to death,' then humanity must be able to rise and say: 'German hands helped to destroy the criminals.' *That day will save Germany.*"

I have put the concluding sentence into italics, for it seems to me to clinch the point that a German revolutionary government that has overthrown the Nazi regime will have "made good" in Russian eyes, whenever the revolution breaks out, and even if it occurs only after the military defeat of Germany. It flatly contradicts the attempts being made, for instance in the *Sunday Times*, to suggest that the Soviet Government are coming round to a Vansittart view of the German problem, and will at the peace settlement hold the whole German nation responsible for the iniquities of the Nazis, unless the German people revolt "now" against their Nazi masters (whatever "now" means in this context!).

A LABOUR CANDIDATE

PLUTO AND PERSEPHONE

SIR,—If I have misrepresented Miss Denby's views on planning, as she and Professor Taylor allege, I am glad to be corrected; but it is a pity that the nature of my error was not described, for after re-reading *Pluto and Persephone* I still find the half-dozen lines in which I endeavoured to state its theme to be a not inaccurate *précis* of the article. Your correspondents Mrs. Jean Mann and Mr. R. N. Haward appear to share my view of its meaning.

Miss Denby uses certain phrases which imply that she takes a very practical and hard-headed view of planning, but which seem to me almost meaningless in this connection. She says, for example, that "planning should be based on fact instead of on wishful thinking and preconceived theories."

On what facts should planning be based? On the facts of our existing unplanned environment? Some of those facts are significant, others quite irrelevant. Everyone recognises that town and country planning must take account of human needs and the available means of satisfying them. But the mere assembling of facts will never lead to the production of any plan whatever, for a plan must be based on some preconceived notion of what is desirable; and this in turn will influence to some extent the selection of the facts.

Again, what is the meaning of the term "wishful thinking"? Was Wren's plan for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire based on facts or on "wishful thinking"? Wren had a fine conception of the opportunity offered by the destruction of much of the London of his day, and he brought his creative imagination into play on the subject. Was this "wishful thinking"? And were the narrow-minded shopkeepers and business men who rejected that plan and insisted on rebuilding the City on the mean and ignoble lines which have persisted with a few changes ever since, basing themselves on "fact"? I suggest that Miss Denby's ideas on planning need reconsideration.

Miss Denby asks me to state my own views as to "what the planning movement is aiming at" instead of "retiring behind vague generalisations." I can readily comply with her request. They are set out in a recent pamphlet entitled *The War and the Planning Outlook* (published by Faber).

WILLIAM A. ROBSON

THIS ENGLAND

SIR,—Fair trial, you will agree, should precede sentence to the pillory; but someone appears to have forgotten this when printing in "This England" of February 14th an item in the following form:—

> The war against Japan must be won, if only to restore white prestige in South Africa.—*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury.*

Any of your readers who do not know *The Yorkshire Post* will think this extract is an editorial dictum. In fact it is part of a sentence from a signed article explaining how South Africans regard the war. The context is as follows:—

> . . . This, then, is the appeal of National Socialism in South Africa. There is, however, another angle to the race question which, with Japan in the war and threatening South Africa's eastern shore, militates against sympathy for the Axis. South Africa's two million whites, themselves racially divided, live in uneasy mastery of eight million Bantus, Indians and other African and Asiatic races. Japanese victories have been a blow at white prestige. The war against Japan must be won, if only to restore white prestige in South Africa, where it is no more zealously guarded than by the Boer himself.

The sentence you have pilloried is not a doctrine that this paper has urged, and not a doctrine that our contributor has urged, but is the reported view of South Africans. To print it in the form used in "This England" is unfair and misleading. Indeed, if such a style of quotation were permissible, others would be justified in taking some foolish passage that you had quoted in your columns and giving it the credit line, "From *The New Statesman*."

W. L. ANDREWS, Editor, *The Yorkshire Post*.

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DENT

BOOKS IN GENERAL

VERY often this page is devoted to a book in particular, but this week it shall be in general. A *voyage autour de ma table* reveals the silt of days, books read and reviewed, books read but not yet reviewed, half-read books, books that have collected a following, that have too quickly turned sour or lie face down unopened. Towards them as a whole I feel the humility of a man faced by his bread-and-butter; but submission is tinged with insolence. They feed me, these volumes, but also they ask to be tasted. I can spit out my bread-and-butter. Individually (I shall return in a moment to several) they inspire every feeling from love to accidie, reminding me in various degrees of my function with a pen. The critic is someone who has picked up bad reading habits. He reads too much (yet how else is he to read enough?); he reads sometimes for pleasure, sometimes for meagre profit; he reads far too many books at a time, skipping through some, plodding in others; he has different levels of reading, only a few of which are ever shown to the public. Below the top level (encounters with masterpieces) there is an underworld of print, full of sensations and hesitations, discoveries, blind alleys, escapes, which for reasons of vanity he seldom divulges. There, if lucky, he can slide back into uncritical enjoyments and brown studies, to emerge as from a mud-bath and pen his wise article on *Tristram Shandy*. Of course, he has always relished Sterne, but what about the rest-cure, the paragraph in an old diary or the advertisement that made his eye light up? Forgotten probably, though it did the trick. Less than a hundredth of the words that go in at the eye—even the critic's eye—are literature; the rest is print, unclassifiable and rarely acknowleged. And which is stronger, love of literature or the reading habit? I don't know, they seem pretty evenly matched. Only habit, I am sure, enables me to go on reading through some pages of Proust or Crabbe (much though I admire both), and I enjoy detective stories for exactly the wrong reason: they send me to sleep quickly at night. After the books that have woken me up, I should put next those that have sent me to sleep.

* * *

Tones from the underworld surprise me. Here is a passage from a book which I find myself incapable either of reading or of throwing away:

> The technique is simple enough. Every morning and evening after cleansing the root of the tongue with water by the aid of the second and third fingers, it is drawn out and stretched in all directions in order to make it supple and flexible. In order to grasp it firmly it is necessary in the beginning to use a piece of cloth. Silk is preferable. This is to be continued until it is possible to touch the tip of the nose with the tongue. The tongue is then turned back on itself in the effort to suck it as far as possible into the throat. Eventually one can swallow it with ease. As soon as the sensitive nerves in the affected region are accommodated to the touch, all unpleasant sensation will disappear. Six months should be spent in developing the practice. Ultimately one will be able to go about with his tongue turned back all the time.
>
> While perfecting this practice I suffered many embarrassing moments. As soon as you have swallowed the tongue, the mouth begins to fill up with saliva, which you are advised to swallow. I would be studying, or walking along the street, with a mouth full of saliva, when a friend would call out Hello. My usual reaction was a great gulp, which it was difficult to explain away, except by the remark that I had been day-dreaming. I was continually in a position where I had to make excuses for myself which were never plausible.

These sentences come from *Heaven Lies Within Us*, by Theos Bernard (Rider, 15*s*.). There are equally remarkable descriptions of the author learning to stand on his head and mastering the delights of Pranayama.

* * *

From p. 19 of a new novel:

> Frenchie poured herself another drink.
>
> "Lemme do the worrying," she said. "Now boys, here's the set-up. Benny's putting on a Friday face too soon. I don't like the cops any better than you do. We're goin' into the hi-jacking business. I find you the jobs and you see to it that other guys do the work. Then we grab the swag and the bulls can go and chase the mutts that pulled the job. Get the idea?"
>
> "Sure," said Len, "I get it. But how are you gonna get the dope, Frenchie? You're a smart chippy, but you're a crooner, a sweet warbler—what do you know of rackets?"
>
> She gave him a pitying look.
>
> "What do I know? Listen, dumb guy, I wasn't Larry's girl for five years for nothing. Mebbe he didn't tell you guys what went on inside his conk, but he told me plenty—especially when he was boiled, which was often. Besides we dames have ways of getting to know things you haven't," etc.

I haven't got much further than p. 19 of *A Kiss for a Killer* (Jarrolds, 7*s*. 6*d*.), but I can see that it registers a decline in gangster fiction, with only the sex and the shooting and the queer monosyllables left. It is described on the wrapper as "brutal, sexy." Once at least in literature this kind of underworld has been jauntily raised to poetry—in *The Beggar's Opera*; and Gay's *The Mohocks* is a good gangster play of the time.

* * *

Two books on *Hamlet*. "What happens in Hamlet?" is a question which not only the critic but every playgoer must at times have asked himself. There are many problems: Does Hamlet believe the Ghost's story? How far is Hamlet in love, how far mad? Why does he shrink from killing his uncle at prayer? Why is the Mouse-trap made to click twice, drama being preceded by dumb-show? The answer to most questions will depend on our conception of Hamlet himself. Coleridge and Bradley built up between them a philosophical doubter, torn by inner conflict, who still holds the imagination and the stage; and some complexities have been added since by psychoanalysis. Without that "malady of the will," in fact—the inspiration of a whole literature—we should find it difficult to recognise Hamlet as Hamlet. Yet Shakespeare's contemporaries were oblivious of it, audiences in the eighteenth century (including Dr. Johnson and Dryden) found nothing to puzzle over. Modern scholarship has been concerned to restore the original character. It is a valuable act of salvage, in which Professor E. E. Stoll—whose *Shakespeare and Other Masters* (Oxford Press, 25*s*. 6*d*.) continues the work of twenty years—has played the leading part. He argues that Hamlet, like all Shakespeare's characters, is not a psychological portrait but a personage dramatically convincing—"noble and fearless, loving and generous, mettlesome and spirited, and, like a true romantic or epic hero, continually more than a match for his enemies with both weapon and wit"; and Hamlet's delay is attributed partly to dramatic necessity and partly to obstacles of which an Elizabethan audience would be more aware than we. His scruple, for example, about killing the kneeling Claudius was exactly as he said: he wished to make certain that his uncle would go straight to hell. Professor Stoll's argument is criticism of the first order and he uses all the evidence brilliantly, not only in discussing *Hamlet* but in the analysis of other Shakespeare plays, and in comparisons with Jonson, Sophocles, Racine, Molière, Ibsen. His main point—that Shakespeare's creation is a matter of poetry and *optique du théâtre*—will be disputed by no one. But by that same *optique du théâtre*, surely, a "modern" Hamlet has superseded the original. Ought we, then, to agree with Tolstoy? He took the view that because Shakespeare's characters lacked psychological motive they were unreal: "There is no possibility of finding any explanation of Hamlet's actions and speeches, and therefore no possibility of attributing any character to him." The fact that character *has* been attributed to Hamlet, in double doses, he explains by collective hallucination. But it seems to me that both Tolstoy and Professor Stoll ignore one thing: the personal strain which we feel as strongly in *Hamlet* as in the sonnets. That in itself is enough to explain an added dimension belonging to no other character in Shakespeare. (I can't see Prospero as an autobiographical figure). This point is missed in another good and careful book of criticism, *The Character of Hamlet, and Other Essays* (University of North Carolina Press, $3). The author, Mr. J. E. Hankins, follows Stoll much of the way and provides some fascinating detail about Renaissance politics and religion and the influence of popular beliefs. Perhaps I am wrong in saying that Professor Stoll and Mr. Hankins have missed the autobiographical clue; rather, they ignore it, distrusting all such critical jumps.

One critic, mentioned by Mr. Hankins, solved the problem by deciding that Hamlet must be a woman.

* * *

Critical salvage of another kind has discovered in recent years the original words of Blake. His early editors, who seem to have had little regard for accuracy, were not above rewriting such lines of Blake's as distressed them. The Nonesuch edition of 1925 gave us a complete and final text, and, using this text to correct misquotations, Mr. Ruthven Todd has produced a new edition of Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake* for the Everyman Library (Dent, 3*s*.). Some of the restitutions were necessary. These lines, for example, from *The Gates of Paradise* describe the eternal man and his female under the tree:

> Serpent Reasonings us entice
> Of Good & Evil, Virtue & Vice.
> Doubt Self Jealous, Wat'ry folly,
> Struggling thro' Earth's Melancholy
> Naked in Air, in Shame & Fear,
> Blind in Fire with shield & spear,
> Two Horn'd Reasoning, Cloven Fiction,
> In Doubt, which is Self contradiction,
> A dark Hermaphrodite We stood
> Rational Truth, Root of Evil & Good

Nonsense had been made of this passage by Gilchrist who printed the seventh line as "Two horrid reasoning cloven fictions."

Mr. Todd has also amended Gilchrist's errors of fact and provided more quotations. He has, in fact, refurbished Gilchrist. It is a good Life, with more bustle than discrimination, and possessing the advantage that the author could draw from people who had talked to Blake. The most readable account of Blake I know is Alan Clutton-Brock's little volume in the Duckworth Great Lives series; one of the least readable, but so scholarly and full as to be indispensable, is Miss Mona Wilson's *Life of William Blake* (Peter Davies, 1927). I have been re-reading Blake. In general, I find it best to detach the poems from the pictures, and to discard the second. But with the later poems this is usually not possible. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, which need no illustration, still seem to me the best of the prophetic books, though there are magnificent passages everywhere. I remembered the parallel, suggested once by Mr. Cyril Connolly, with Rimbaud, and it is a very enlightening one. The child's eye, nursery song and prose poem, discovery of hell, even the "calculated disorder of the senses": plenty in common, though Rimbaud was never innocent, and Blake instead of going to Abyssinia chose Felpham and midnight talks with the dead. Also, Blake is among the wisest of poets.

* * *

More books catch my eye: a masterpiece, Hasek's *The Good Soldier Schweik* (not the Penguin but the complete edition published by Putnam); Osbert Lancaster's *New Pocket Cartoons* (Murray, 2*s*. 6*d*.), postage-stamps of wit; a pamphlet by Capt. Cunningham-Reid showing up the intrigues of the Conservative Central Office (Allen, 2*s*. 6*d*.); and Allan Laing's *Bank Holiday on Parnassus* (Allen and Unwin, 6*s*.). The last is a sprightly little book of anecdotes, parodies and verses brought forth by Mr. Laing's journalistic fancy. I need hardly introduce him to those who read our last page but one. He is the mysterious elder of a world in which no novice can compete without murmuring doubtfully, "Better than Laing?"

And that is only a top layer of the books on my mind.

G. W. STONIER

AFTER MALVERN

Malvern—1941. With an introduction by the Archbishop of York. *Longmans.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Vocation of England. By MAURICE RECKITT AND J. V. LANGMEAD CASSERLEY. *Longmans,* 5*s.*

The Church Looks Ahead. By J. H. OLDHAM AND OTHERS. *Faber and Faber.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

What It Will Be Like in the New Britain. By RICHARD ACLAND, M.P. *Gollancz.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

The Malvern Findings, as set out in the report of the Conference over which Dr. Temple presided a year ago and elaborated in the pamphlet *Malvern and After*, seem likely to be regarded as a landmark in the modern history of the Church of England. Following, with some caution, the Christian Socialists of the beginning of the century the Conference, which had 23 bishops among its members, condemned the profit-making motive in industry and the private ownership of "the principal industrial resources," it demanded equality of opportunity, the assurance of employment with adequate wages for a full life and sufficient leisure for every citizen, and education with vocational training until the age of 18. It emphasised the need for "the conservation and stabilisation of the family." It repeated that "it is a traditional doctrine of Christendom that property is necessary to fulness of personal life," though "where the rights of property conflict with the establishment of social justice or the general social welfare those rights should be over-ridden, modified, or, if need be, abolished." All this is the definite or implied condemnation of capitalism, and since none of the Malvern objectives is possible under capitalism, the Findings have been commonly regarded as a plea for some form of collectivism.

The publication of the papers read at the Conference in the volume *Malvern—1941* shows that the discussions that followed must have been far more responsible for the Findings than the papers themselves. There are strong and fundamental differences between the various writers. For example, Sir Richard Acland declared that it is useless to tinker with the present system since "the private ownership of the major resources of our country is indeed the stumbling block which is making it harder for us to advance towards the Kingdom of God on earth." And Mr. Kenneth Ingram found in Socialism the only practical better way. On the other hand the Rev. W. G. Peck told the Conference that collectivism has "no foundation in the Christian metaphysic" and Dr. Demant made the startling discovery that Fascism is "the contemporary form of Socialism" and that Russian Communism is "liquidated," whatever that may mean. It has been inevitable that the Christian sociologist, acutely aware of the moral and material havoc wrought by capitalist monopoly and the monetary system should be fearful of Socialism since in the only country where it exists there is neither political liberty nor spiritual freedom. The Christian contends for full regard of the sacredness of human personality and he finds as little sure regard in Bolshevist Russia as in Nazi Germany.

In their *The Vocation of England*, Mr. Reckitt and Mr. Casserley repeat the demand made by Mr. George Orwell in *The Lion and the Unicorn* that whatever may be the structure of the new England it shall remain English and not become an imitation Russia. There is much that is admirable in the book, though it is marred by Mr. Reckitt's over-eagerness to be smart, and the authors justly emphasise that the most difficult of contemporary problems is "how to combine freedom with organisation, liberty with justice." They assert that a man will remain "a wage slave" so long as he is property-less, whether he receives his wages from a private employer or from the State. They think of the State, as to some extent Sir Richard Acland does, as a bureaucracy and they are convinced that with the extension of State authority there must be some destructive bureaucratic tyranny. But it is surely permissible to believe that, with the nation's long experience of semi-democracy and its tradition of liberty, the technical expert and the Civil Servant could both be kept in hand by a truly democratic parliament backed by informed public opinion. And Mr. Reckitt and his collaborator spoil their case by glib statement. For example, they say that "free doctoring and free schooling could have no place in an ideal State." In a collectivist State the doctoring and the schooling would be common services paid for out of the common income. There would be no question of favour or charity. With a well-organised State medical service, too, the patient would, so far as it is possible, have a choice of doctors—that, by the way, is impossible now in most villages. But it is as obviously against the common interest to allow parents to choose their children's school as it would be to allow them to decide whether the child shall go to school at all.

The authors are insistent on the fullest possible recovery of the life of the countryside, but they have an exaggerated idea of the maximum number of workers who could find employment on the land in any circumstances. With his unrivalled knowledge Sir Daniel Hall puts this maximum at a million and a half. The smallholding should have a larger part in the agricultural economy, but if the ideal is to be the largest possible production of food the tendency to larger and larger farms will be more and more marked. It is amusing that after the plea for universal ownership the authors come to the common-sense conclusion: "The smallholder . . . could either own his land directly or be the tenant of a public authority. The English tradition favours upon the whole the latter alternative which provides the smallholder with all the essentials of ownership but frees him from burdens which, even under the most favourable conditions might well prove too heavy for him to bear." Here there is the admission of the virtue of collectivism.

Thinking of the future of England the authors are concerned with the progressive fall in the population as well they may be with Japanese successes in the Pacific. They are right in the suggestion that the low birth rate is not altogether due to economic reasons, and they may be right in the further suggestion that urban conditions of life make for sterility and the common use of contraceptives is not wholly responsible for small families. But as a matter of fact, the small family has become the rule in the village as well as in the town. If there is to be a rise in the birth rate, there must be, as this book well says, more economic security, "a realignment of English thought and feeling with both natural and supernatural realities."

Among the Reckitt alternatives to collectivism are social dividends and the restoration of the mediaeval guilds, in the complexities of the modern world an obvious impossibility except in a few small industries. The social dividend would be an income paid, as of right "to every boy and every girl who's born into this world alive" from birth to death whether he was a useful worker or a tiresome loafer. With these ingenious bubbles there can be no serious consideration.

Sir Richard Acland's *What It Will Be Like in the New Britain* is, with other virtues, at least practical. He has worked out a scheme for the organisation of industry under common ownership, with proposals for compensation and with due consideration for the preservation of individual liberty. He does not make it clear where his common ownership would cease and he has not adequately tackled the basic problem of distribution. He has, however, valiantly tried to translate the Malvern aspirations into practical political proposals.

From my own contacts I know how profoundly Malvern has affected Christian opinion, both in the Church of England and in the Free Churches. If that opinion can be organised into clear-cut action to reach the goal that Malvern has suggested, there will be a real chance that the new society, to be built on the society now crumbling into ruins, may be Christian in the finest sense of the term. But, as these books imply, there is the danger that the influence may be dissipated, partly through fear and partly through sheer crankiness into the pursuit of the fantastic and the impossible. And there is a further danger as Mr. T. S. Eliot hints in *The Church Looks Ahead*, a series of rather snippy broadcasts, that religious people will be content, as they so often have been, with repeating and enjoying amiable platitudes.

SIDNEY DARK

NEW NOVELS

The Vulgar Streak. By WYNDHAM LEWIS. *Robert Hale.* 8*s.*

The Skies of Europe. By FREDERIC PROKOSCH. *Chatto & Windus.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

The Men from Java. By JEAN MALAQUAIS. *Minerva-Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

This winter has seen few new novels which rise above the level of conventional proficiency. I am entitled to spread that amount of gloom and despondency, for I have just waded through five books consecutively which it will be kinder not to mention by name. I only refer to them at all in order to add zest to the welcome which is due to the three novelists on my list. Wyndham Lewis is, of course, a writer from whom one expects something uncommon, but Jean Malaquais is a newcomer and Frederic Prokosch has not hitherto seemed to me to merit the exceptional praise which he has received. Each of these three books, however, has outstanding virtues: enough certainly to rank with the few memorable novels of any year. Set them beside the absolute masterpieces of fiction and there will naturally be criticisms to make, but their level is such that it would be both stupid and insulting to measure them by gentler standards.

The Vulgar Streak is not Wyndham Lewis at his best, but Mr. Lewis can nod and still be a highly provocative and teasing observer of human comedy. For his central character Mr. Lewis selects a mysteriously synthetic young toff, Vincent Penhale, who is convicted in the end of a double fraud: first, of passing counterfeit money, and secondly, of passing a counterfeit upper-class culture to which—as a charwoman's son—he was not entitled. On the subjects of English caste and bank control of credit Mr. Lewis gets in some hefty broadsides, but I think he loses something of tragedy by making his Liza Dolittle such an articulate and pontifical accuser (Penhale in effect is Liza and Higgins rolled into one). In the past Mr. Lewis has avoided the demands of tragedy by desiccating his characters, but in *The Vulgar Streak* he departs from his customary urbanity and toys with the possibility of a "strong" romantic drama. The result is a curious dualism—as if Mr. Lewis had undertaken to rewrite a novelette. The heroine, April Mallow, belongs to the "serial" literature that her name suggests, and at the outset Mr. Lewis confronts her in his celebrated guise as the Spilsbury of the Western Morgue; but after April has been gulled into marrying Penhale and has been stunned by the magnitude of his deceptions, she puts up such a display of wifely devotion as to bring surprising tears to Mr. Lewis's notoriously dry eyes. There is a murder. There is an epidemic of death and disaster that begins to rival *Hamlet*. The curtain falls abruptly on a more sultry finale than I expected Mr. Lewis ever to permit himself.

It may be that the author has been amusing himself with the experiment of injecting a shot of full-strength Lewisite into the routine dummies of romantic fiction. The result certainly is entertaining, though it breaks the back of any unity the novel might have had. As in Shaw's slighter and more narrowly didactic plays—for example, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*—there is the constant pleasure of watching an energetic, provocative and witty intellect galvanizing a set of characters which in less robust hands would be intolerably dull.

Mr. Prokosch makes a fascinating contrast with Wyndham Lewis. There can scarcely be two more dissimilar writers. Mr. Lewis's figures seem

to be carved out of a very hard matt-surfaced wood, touched up here and there with a smart dab of paint, and dandled like marionettes to illustrate a play of ideas. Mr. Prokosch, on the other hand, is immersed in the iridescence of sensation, the fabulous glamour that shines off the immediate précarious surface of things. Blessed with a poet's image-making faculty, he creates a more copious and vivid picture of place than any writer since Lawrence. Indeed Lawrence was sometimes teased for his ability to psychologise a nation after six hours in a hotel, but Mr. Prokosch can apparently dash off a very creditable impression of anywhere from Martinique to Mandalay without even going there.

Like Mr. Prokosch's previous novels, *The Skies of Europe* takes in an enormous panorama. Philip, the peripatetic narrator, flits to and fro between Paris, Munich, Austria, Spain and the Riviera, conjuring up scene after scene with a prodigious delight in local detail. The names of newspapers, the colours of drinks, the nationalities and complexions of waitresses—everything possesses an alluring lambency and avows its tortured significance in the dance of death which whirled Europe into war. Far from being an orthodox novel, *The Skies of Europe* is like a cross between a ballet and a *March of Time*. The decor is sumptuous and brilliant. Characters flare up and vanish in the dazzling ephemeral way of fireworks, dozens and scores at a time. The continental drama moves like a great tide, reflected in every gesture and trivial conversation. As a thumb-nail impressionist Mr. Prokosch is superlatively good. He ranges through picaresque low comedy, the agonies of high romance, the Spanish Civil War, the sophisticated and the bucolic, with quite amazing virtuosity.

And yet, when the whole glittering excitement dies down, there is a suspicion of hollowness at the centre. Saskia, who is perhaps the only full-length character in the book, is the symptom of Mr. Prokosch's infatuation with the mysterious and the "fatal." She talks ridiculously and behaves idiotically, but Mr. Prokosch surrounds her with his special incantations and conjures out of her a sackful of very *recherché* sensations. As with Saskia, so with the others—the tendency is always to mystify what should be simple, to reduce everything to a depraved gothic choreography in which each attitude is obsessed with the macabre glamour of unanchored sensationalism. Mr. Prokosch is so exceptionally gifted that his future development does not concern only his publisher and his mother. *The Skies of Europe*, as intoxicatingly rich as the ambitions of a Levantine merchant, is certain to enhance his reputation and ought not to be missed by discriminating readers.

In *The Men from Java* Jean Malaquais has something in common with Mr. Prokosch. He also is happiest with a stage full of characters, in which the individual is overshadowed by the group and by the emotional climate of the place. The "Java" of the title is not the present address of General Wavell, but a mining-camp in Southern France, employing a "Foreign Legion of labourers." I was extremely puzzled by the first chapter, which is so devoid of any connection with the rest of the book that I am prepared to believe it has slipped in by mistake. Thereafter M. Malaquais concentrates on an *estaminet*, a brother and the mining-camp, with a nice eye for character. At least a dozen portraits in the book have real freshness, and the atmosphere of Java is vividly realised. M. Malaquais commands the enviably easy air of realism which English fiction so often lacks; I hope his début in this country will be as much appreciated as it deserves to be.

DESMOND HAWKINS

A MARRIAGE HAS BEEN ARRANGED

Marriage Bureau. By MARY OLIVER and MARY BENEDETTA. *Michael Joseph.* 10s. 6d.

"Le mariage ne dérive point de la nature": Balzac was so struck by these words of Napoleon's, in the discussion on the Code Civil, that he put them on the first page of his *Physiologie du Mariage*. A rather vulgar book, but marriage is a subject on which it is customary to be a little vulgar; one has to laugh at that eight-legged animal for fear of weeping. Napoleon's words come back when one picks up the brisk account which Misses Oliver and Benedetta have written about Miss Oliver's Bond Street matrimonial bureau. Most of us have a confused notion that nature drove us into marriage; here is the story of the work of an organisation that assists the less deluded and therefore less happy followers of Napoleon. Nature had hindered rather than helped them. Somehow they never met the right party; somehow they had not the strength, time or nerve to start on that sexual skirmishing which precedes courtship and which is so exhausting to the sensitive, the suspicious and the spry. In Bond Street, for a registration fee of five guineas, one could begin at stage two of boy meets girl, with the ball rolling at one's foot.

The romantic conception of marriage as an individual and transcendental adventure is so strong among us that it is with the greatest difficulty that one believes in the existence of matrimonial agencies. One imagined them, if they really existed, to be the veiled resorts of the licentious or the mug. On the contrary, the dubious joke turns out to be the supremely genteel fact. Sin has its *entrepreneurs*; why not virtue, whose tasks are so much more arduous and whose summits far less accessible? The card indexes, the artificial flowers, the typewriters, the cage of love-birds hanging in the office of Miss Oliver and her partner, guarantee a business-like respectability; and, I have no doubt, a shrewd eye for the wags who see the opportunity for a leg-pull. The whole thing seems inevitable when you think about our times. We live in an age of labour-saving devices. Marriage was bound to come up for rationalisation. After the last war marriage adopted the instalment system; now it moves into the branded goods and national mark systems and is delivered in airtight cartons.

And, of course, up to a hundred or so years ago this had always been the procedure in civilised countries. I mean the arranged marriage, the marriage which is determined not by the interested parties alone, but by their parents or relations who select the partners with special regard to their social and financial standing. One sees the system and some of its rebels in Jane Austen's novels, and it has provided the theme of the eloping heroine for all literature. The fact is that in Europe, Islam, China—wherever there has been civilisation—the marriages of the richer classes generally were arranged and the practice coloured the behaviour of all classes. Among the Irish peasants and in the Jewish communities the matchmaker working on commission is still employed; indeed there can hardly be any kind of society, from Bongo-Bongo to Mayfair where an elaborately organised marriage market has not existed. The romantic may deplore this; but, the rather dubious evidence of late Victorian fiction apart, there is no reason to believe that arranged marriages are less happy than the free. Miss Oliver, who claims to have kept in touch with the marriages she has facilitated, says that they are all happy. Is it better to be conscribed into marriage or to stumble into it "freely" in a state of temporary insanity? Since the romantic movement we have thrown over the whole tradition of civilised practice. We have plumped for insanity; our failures go into the divorce courts, where the

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ADAM & CHARLES BLACK

earlier ones were relieved by the demi-monde.

What precisely do Miss Oliver and her partner do? They go through their large daily correspondence, sort out the applications. If possible, they like to see their clients. Then they go into a huddle. The mating process is on and a list of possible partners is made out. They give you the introductions; you report on the results. More huddles may follow until satisfaction is reached. When it is reached it adds £21 to the cost of your wedding. Not unnaturally the authors stress the financial strength of their clients; a peerage or two tones up the record; but in the main the average client seems to be the middle-class man with £600 to £700 a year. The working classes can always "click" at the Saturday night dance. There is a considerable export trade to the colonies, where lonely men have no silly inhibitions about how they get their wives, as long as they get them; though one gathers that, if people are sensible enough to go to a serious agency, they are not greatly embarrassed by the originality of their starting point. That the middle classes should use the agency most is due, no doubt, to the expense; also to a belief in having things done for them and to the morbid isolation which middle-class life forces upon the timid, the lumpish school-teacher, the difficult nurse, the stupefied widow, the worried widower and the hermit crab of the Civil Service—Civil Servants form a large party in the Bond Street lists. Mannequins, too. They are offered everything except marriage and droop alone over the ironing boards of their bed-sitters. In most of these people the all-important initial impulse in the process of "getting off" seems to have withered. Instinct has failed. It might be thought that one's class, one's group, would do the job for one. But in the last thirty years, with the break-up of family life, there has been a great increase in the classless, groupless. The decline of church-going, once the great hunting ground, may have something to do with the secret problem of urban loneliness.

One is at first inclined to contempt for people who are too cautious to "pick up" or risk their arm. And yet, if one reflects a moment, one sees it is the rest of us who are the herd. Recklessly we take the easy course. The clients of the marriage bureau, compared with us, are enormously courageous. They are afraid neither of society nor of themselves. In love we lie like troopers. These others write to the office and, as the author points out, begin by telling the truth. They are both heroic and, it seems, accurate. Who are they? In one year, fifty tea planters, four M.P.s, sixty bank clerks, innumerable Civil Servants. But no artists or musicians. One man wanted a woman who played the violin, but he was stone deaf. Doctors are in demand, but no one wants a dentist; retired bachelors are almost unsaleable; so are nurses after their first youth, as they tend to develop a domineering character. One would have liked to know more about the proportion of young to old clients; naturally there is a tactful silence on this point. The curious will find in this discreetly snobbish and level-headed book, some of the peculiar banalities of human nature in search of the sweet mystery of life. One lady who was fixed up gives an account of the whole process. With all its hesitations, it rings very true. I especially liked the moment when the partner to whom she was introduced asked her where they should dine. "I didn't like to say the Ritz to a stranger . . ." she says. As a phrase book, this is a gold mine for Mass Observers. My only doubt, on the author's behalf, is whether it is good publicity. Perhaps it is; people aren't such fools as we think. They know what they want.

V. S. PRITCHETT

LATIN AMERICA

Inside Latin America. By JOHN GUNTHER. *Hamish Hamilton.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

With the Pan-American Conference at Rio de Janeiro in January, Latin America—as distinct from this or that Latin American State—can at least be said to have moved into a definable position on the politico-strategic map of the World War. That the Rio agreement to recommend rupture of relations with the Axis by all the States represented was a compromise, watering down the resolution calling for rupture instead of merely recommending it, is not the surprising point. The remarkable and significant fact is that Chile, despite its exposed position following loss of Anglo-American sea-power in the Pacific, and Argentina, despite its long-cherished hopes of grabbing South American leadership for itself by playing Europe against the United States, should have, nevertheless, agreed to so much.

It might be possible to treat the united political decisions at Rio as shadowy and misleading, in comparison with the hard facts of internal rivalries and contradictions just beneath the surface, were it not that the tug of financial and commercial currents is certainly in the direction of pulling Latin America closer and closer to the United States, and hence towards the reality of "hemisphere defence." With a certain irony history has arranged matters so that the "Good Neighbour Policy" first proclaimed by Mr. Roosevelt in 1933, and launched with the repeal of the Platt Amendment and the assurances given at the Montevideo Conference in the same year, is tending towards a closer interdependence of North, Central and South American economy than was ever achieved in the blatant days of naked "dollar imperialism."

First the Atlantic blockade, which cut Latin America off from its European sources and European markets; more recently still the Japanese advances in the Far East, which have incalculably increased United States dependence on Latin American tin, copper, rubber and other raw materials; and, finally, the immediate defence needs of South America—which can now regard both Dakar and the Southern Pacific Islands as too close for comfort—have together made it certain that the main commercial and financial trends of the immediate future must be towards mutual planning. In exchange for vital Latin American products, the United States can provide the Latin American States with finished armaments and, with loans for the creation first of direct defences, and, secondly, of a partial armament industry of their own. Now only two things can cut across and reverse that trend. One is Fifth Column activity in Latin America on a scale and with a success, in terms of political power, such as is difficult to conceive possible. The other is direct successful military intervention by the Axis Powers.

In any case, despite the deplorable "under-reporting" of Latin America which was a feature of the British press long before the shortage of newsprint made matters still worse, it has to be seen that Latin America is being edged into an increasingly conspicuous place in the immediate picture of the war.

I mention the "under-reporting" of Latin America because it is the true reason why Mr. Gunther's *Inside Latin America* has to be rated as a book of real value. I daresay if Latin America had been "covered" in the British newspapers as fully as, say, the Balkans, there would be no good reason for recommending this except as the very lightest of light reading. It would be easy to pick this book full of holes to admit that it is superficial, lacking in perspective, and once or twice falls with frank bewilderment into a morass of confusions and misleading

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assertions when it attempts to deal with the trends of domestic policy within the separate States. The title itself is misleading if it conveys to anyone the impression that we are really being taken "behind the scenes" or shown "the real works" more plainly and intimately than they are displayed in the writings of the regular American special correspondents.

It may appear a back-handed sort of compliment, but it is a real tribute to Mr. Gunther that these failings, which might be supposed fatal to such a book, are as a matter of fact irrelevant. And I think the answer to this apparent paradox is to be found in Mr. Gunther's essential modesty of approach. He does not pretend to know the secrets of Latin America. But he does, on return from a trip of swift investigation through all the twenty countries of Latin America, lay in front of the reader a large and valuable list of facts without which it is absurd to try to understand anything about Latin America at all. When he is perplexed by the political complexities of his subject he frankly admits that it is all very confusing, that probably nothing is quite what it seems to be, and that anyway this, and this, and this, were what he was told and was able to pick up. And as for what I have called his lack of perspective, that is perhaps a virtue. For his method is to present as clearly and simply as possible to the reader a huge quantity of facts—trivial as the mannerisms of a Foreign Secretary, serious as the attitude of a leading Argentinian to the race question—and leave it to the reader to try to sort these facts of such varying weights into whatever more coherent pattern may please him.

Only two sorts of people will be put off by the superficialities of Mr. Gunther's book: those who are so learned that they already know everything he has to tell them (and they will not be very many), and those who are so stupid as to scorn his information because it does not have a sufficient air of profundity and some of it may be inaccurate, too.

Mr. Gunther's capacity to evoke the atmosphere, psychological and political "feel"—one might almost say "smell"—of a town, a group and an individual, is large and brilliant. It is not his fault that some part of the large space which he necessarily devotes to the question of the Fifth Column in Latin America and the attitude of the Latin American States and personalities to the United States and the war has been left behind by the rush of events. It is again a tribute to his reportorial qualities that despite the swiftness of developments since the book was written—long ago, before Pearl Harbour—his reports on Nazi activities and the political attitude of the Governments are still of genuine value in the light they throw upon the most recent events.

CHARLES TAIN

Week-end Competitions

No. 629

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes are offered for the best clerihews about well-known characters in fiction. Competitors may send as many as they like.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, March 2.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 626

Set by Thomas Smallbones

The Royal Academy habit of using some lines of verse as a title or subtitle for their pictures was unluckily not used by the Old Masters or the more reputable moderns. The usual prizes are offered for re-naming any three of the following with quotation-titles: (1) *La Gioconda*; (2) Bosch's *The Temptation of St. Anthony*; (3) Botticelli's *Venus*; (4) Van Gogh's *Postman*; (5) Rodin's *Penseur*; (6) Giorgione's *Fête Champêtre*; (7) Picasso's *Guernica*; (8) Seurat's *La Baignade*; (9) Rubens's *Rape of the Sabine Women*; (10) Rembrandt's *Ganymede*; (11) Sickert's *Ennui*; (12) Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress*.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

It has evidently been a pleasant Sunday night diversion for many competitors—turning over the leaves of memory or favourite pieces, and finding there the apt line, descriptive or interpretative, to suit a picture. Even in this pastime it was not so simple—as a perusal of the entries with their frequent repetitions soon discovered—to avoid the obvious. Yet there were some pleasing comments of one art upon another; *La Gioconda* suggested to Towan-bucket "Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and a tear" (from *Childe Harold*): to Stanley J. Sharpless: "Whose yesterdays look backwards with a smile" (Young's *Night Thoughts*). To Nannette "Others abide our question. Thou art free. We ask and ask: Thou smilest and art still." Sickert's *Ennui* suggested to N.L. "And so from hour to hour we rot and rot"; to Nannette "We look before and after, and pine for what is not"; to G.J.P. "Here am I, here are you. But what does it mean? What are we going to do?" (W. H. Auden). Picasso's *Guernica* suggested to Guy Innes "Streaming with slaughter still but desolate" (a private prize might well be given for tracing this quotation; it is from Croly's *Retreat of the French Army from Moscow*) and to N.L. "Confusion now hath made his masterpiece." The humorous approach went from one extreme to the other: at the gentle end Guy Innes put for Van Gogh's *Postman*; "A man of letters and of manners, too" (Cowper's *Hope*), O.H.E. on *Venus*, "Grace before Meat," Guy Innes again on *The Temptations of St. Anthony*, "My strength is as the strength of ten. Because my heart is pure." or Lucie Milner on the same subject: "I couldn't help it. I can resist everything but temptation" (Oscar Wilde). The Rembrandt (of a squalling child, usually ill-remembered) brought from Joan Greenall: "Speak crossly to your little boy, And smack him when he sneezes." But Rubens, unanimously unfashionable as a pornographic artist, inspired first comedy—"And when he next doth ride abroad may I be there to see," from Arnold Hagenback: "Oh that this too too solid flesh would melt," from William Bliss; and finally introduced sheer slapstick (of the best kind) from "Well Well," who put beneath the *Rape of the Sabine Women* the B.B.C. music-hall catch-phrase "Large lumps—they're lovely." His other two in the same strain deserve quoting, for the *Venus*: "Don't forget the diver," and for *La Gioconda*, "Turned out nice again."

Competitors were asked, they will remember, for quotation-titles, and Clive Bell (which is fair enough), was quickest to spot that if every picture *doesn't* tell a story, at least the subtitle can make a good shot at suggesting one. Second Prize to Guy Innes.

FIRST PRIZE

(4) Van Gogh: *Postman.*
or "Vox Populi, Vox Dei."
(9) Rubens's *Rape of the Sabine Women*
or
"Vorrei e non Vorrei."
(11) Sickert: *Ennui*
or
"No place like Home."

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